

TWO U* 6. 44
SERMONS:

The first, concerning *the last times*, to
shew what they are, and what our duty
is in them.

The second, concerning *the many An-
christs*, or *false teachers* of the
last times.

To shew that such are to be in them, who they are, and
how we should keep our selves from them.

Preached in the sometime Cathedrall
Church of *Windsor*:

By *Humphry Ellis*,

One of the Ministers of the Gospel in that place, and
now published at the intreaty of some friends.

1 COR. 4. 2, 3.

*It is required in Stewards, that a man be found faithful.
But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judg-
ed of you, or of mans judgment.*

GAL. 4. 16.

Am I become your enemy for telling you the truth.

LONDON,

Printed by R. L. for LUKE FAWNE, and are to be sold at his
shop, at the signe of the *Pastor* in *Pauls Church-yard*. 1647.

TWO
SERMONS

The first, concerning the

new wine they are, and what our duty

is to them

The second, concerning the

olive, or oil, which is the

oil of grace

which is the oil of grace

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TO
THE HONORABLE
the Committee of PARLIAMENT,
for the COUNTY of
Southampton.

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Worthy Gentlemen:

NEver was the truth of what the Wiseman speaks, *Eccles. 12. 14.* more experimentally manifested to any people, then to us in these times of ours; (*viz.*) that there is no end of making many Books; and that of the many Books that are now made, the reading can be no lesse then a wearines to the flesh: Yet is not this all, for who is it almost, that doth not now begin to take notice, the abuse of the liberty of Printing now enjoyed by us, to be a principall cause of the encrease and continuance of those sad divisions and distractions, under which our Kingdome at present labours. For of that so great a priviledge now enjoyed by us, how few endeavour to make a good use, and to improve it, for the benefit and edification of the Church of God, in making known and clearing the profitable truths of the Gospel, or in informing and satisfying the mindes of men in a quiet and peaceable manner; even in the controversies of these present times; Though some men may endeavour this, (as their peaceable and profitable writings manifest) yet how small is the number of them. But of that multitude

of Pamphlets daily Printed and from the presse dispet-
fed through the Kingdome, of which we may truly say,
as *Solomon* doth, *that there is no end of making them*,
what is the matter ordinarily contained in them, but vain
janglings, perverse disputings, evil furnizings, the preju-
dices and dicontents of persons and parties against each
other: how full are they many times of rayling, reviling,
and reprochfull language; and how do many of them
serve to no other end then to proclaim abroad the most
dangerous errors and heresies? and some also contain-
ing things seditious against the State and peace of the
Kingdome? by all which men are taken off from the
more profitable study of the holy Scripture, their judg-
ments corrupted and mindes inbittered one against ano-
ther, weak Christians offended, the unstable perverted,
Divisions daily increased, and fomented, the endeavour
of Reformation aspersed, and the work of it by so
many prayers and teares of the godly sought after, re-
tarded, yea, and Authority it self brought into contempt
by them; and an increase daily of all these evils, have
we just cause to feare, unlesse the Lord in mercy prevent
by directing us in some way for the regulating and re-
dressing of these distempers. The consideration of all
which I have, (I can truly say) have made me very averse
from having a thought in mee of publishing any thing,
whereby to be seen in print, insomuch that I always resi-
sted the many solicitations which on severall occasions
I have had thereunto: Being very loth to doe that, for
which I might be ranked with the last sort, and be num-
bred amongst these unprofitable Pamphleters; and judg-
ing my self unable to performe any thing of worth that
may deserve inspection, and procure to it selfe but so
much esteeme, as to be ranked with the first sort mentio-
ned

ned by me) of these profitable things that tend to edification in godlinesse, by some godly Ministers and others now published, of which the number is, as I said, so small in comparison of the other. Yet am I now also come forth amongst the crowd, where I know it will be unto some as strange to see mee, as sometime it was to see Saul, when *among the Prophets*, And for prevention of misapprehensions that may be of my intentions herein, and of the censures to which I may thereby be liable, I shall crave leave so far to apologize for my self and this work, as to shew you the true reason of this my undertaking, both in my publication thereof, as also the dedication of it to your Honours, to whom I hereby humbly offer and present the same.

Thus much I can truly say, and to it call God to witness the searcher of the hearts, that not a desire of being seen in Print, nor any high esteem of any thing in these Sermons contained, nor seeking any esteem to my self by them, nor a willingness to engage and shew my self with or against any party in the Controversies of these present times, have at all moved me to this undertaking; that not but by many strong perswasions, and after much reluctancy of spirit, have I bin brought unto it, that it never came into my thoughts in the first preaching of these Sermons, that ever they should have been made thus publique; that I should have much considered the preaching of them at all, could I have fore-seen, that I should afterward have been brought to a necessity of Printing of them, for nothing lesse then what hath at least the appearance of a necessity in it unto mee, could possibly have been able to have induced mee thereunto, But the true reason thereof I shall acquaint you with all in this brief historicall narration of it.

After

After that through the gracious providence of God
and your favour towards me, I had been called and set-
led in the exercise of my Ministry here in *Winton*; con-
sidering how I might best improve the same for publike
edification, I made choice of the first Epistle of Saint
John, beginning at the beginning thereof, and intending
through Gods assistance, in my ordinary Sermons to go
through the same even unto the end thereof. According
to this intention I had gone through the first Chapter of
it, and about *January* the last 1646, I came to the eigh-
teenth Verse of the second Chapter, upon which text
the two Sermons now here published and presented to
your Honours were preached. In the first of them I took
occasion to discourse freely concerning *the last times*, in
generall, and these times of ours in particular, which are
the latter part of them, and I hope inoffensively, al-
though possibly my judgment therein then delivered not
concurring with some opinions now in these times com-
monly received concerning them: and should not have
published it but for that dependance, the second Sermon
hath on some passages therein; and which is therefore
the cause of the publishing of both of them. In which
(the second Sermon) I have also as freely discoursed
concerning the many Antichrists, or false teachers, men-
tioned in the text as signes of the *last times*, and foretold
of in Scripture to come in their greatest abundance
in the latter part of them; the doctrine of the *☉* *antichrist*
☉ the great Antichrist mentioned also in the text, be-
ing left to succeed in its place afterward. By which it
may appear, that the handling this text and doctrine,
was not purposely made choice of, and to serve for a
present designe, but that which I was necessarily called
unto; and which could not possibly be avoided by mee,

it falling so upon me in that which was thus the ordinary way of my Ministry ; the consideration whereof might have served somewhat to extenuate mine offence, if any had beene in the manner of handling it afterward. Yet knowing this to be such, a very tender Subject especially in these times, wherein such is the jealousie of men of different parties and judgements that they would bee ready to looke on themselves as enended in every thing that should bee spoken in this kinde, and bee ready to apply all to themselves, to the exasperating of their spirits, and discovery of the bitternesse of them. In a foresight of inconveniences and prevention of them, and to take away such occasions of offence from them who I knew would be ready to take them ; And that I might handle this so tender a Subject inoffensively, I forbore in it all mention of any the names, whereby any the particular Sects are known and distinguished amongst us, in any the applications of it to our own times. And in the description of false teachers, which I could not but necessarily fall upon, I can truly say, that I set not any sort of men that now are and their practices before me, as those whom I would prove to be of the *many Antichrists* in the text, whom I went about to describe, but took the Word of God for my rule, to make use of no other character in this description, but such as were taken from the practice of these *many Antichrists* in the Apostles times, and wherein the spirit of errour did then shew it selfe, by which the Apostles themselves described such in their Epistles, and which should be unquestionable truths in themselves, and not to be contradicted by any. These I pitcht upon not caring on whom they should light in the Application, so I faithfully discharge mine own duty in
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the doctrinall parts of them; which Application was not made by mee to any in particular, but left wholly unto the persons to whom I spake, whereby I assured my self, that whatsoever might be in the minds of men, yet they could not have any just ground of quarrell against me, who herein handled no Controversies, but delivered unquestionable truths, and that in a generall manner, so that none might look on themselves more concerned in them then others, then as by the cleer light of the truths, the nature of their own practices being discovered, they should be scared to make the particular Application to themselves, and so their quarrell, if any should rather appear to be against the truths themselves so plainly delivered, then against mee for the manner of the delivery of them.

Yet though all was delivered in this the most unquestionable and inoffensive way, which (as I suppose) in such cases could be proceeded in, yet divers there were especially of the Anabaptists, or that were in their judgment, engaged to them, that discovered themselves to be much exasperated and provoked thereby, applying all the particulars to themselves, as intended against them, and wherein I pitch upon the practices of the Anabaptists, all along, and so went to make them odious: And so though I can say that against the things delivered, I never heard ought objected, so unquestionable they were, yet their great offence was, for my meaning of them, as they said, being herein much alike those who made like application to themselves of the parable of our Saviour, *Luke 20. 19.* they knew that concerning them he had spoken that parable, making application to themselves of what was generally spoken by him, and offended with him for his meaning them, when they could not question

tion the truth of his words: And as those, *Luke 11. 49.*
Master, in thus saying, thou reproachest us likewise, and
from hence have they taken occasion to asperse both me
and the Sermons themselves, censuring these in all pla-
ces where they have come, for bitternesse, for railing a-
gainst the Saints, and that I went about by these Ser-
mons, to make the Saints odious to the world, and cen-
suring me as now a persecutor of the Saints, very false
reports have also been raised on this occasion, of designs
intended, and on foot by me against them, which I shall
forbeare particularly to mention, knowing that the fa-
ther of lies will be ashamed to own them; though they
came from him, yet have these false reports, and mis-
representations of my selfe and Ministry, been carryed
up and down in the countrey in most places of it, yea, to
the City, and divers among your selves, have they been
brought by such, as seek by such generall reports, that
leave no room for vindication; (as in the knowledge of
particulars a man might be able to doe) to asperse me,
representing me to your selves and others, as now a rai-
ler against the Saints, a persecutor of godlinesse, and for
all this having no other visible ground to pretend unto
then the preaching of these Sermons: As for the Saints
of God, and wayes of godlinesse, to so high an esteem of
them hath God raised my heart, that (though possibly
some of different judgements, from me in the contro-
versies of these times) as I am assured nothing hitherto
hath been so, I am as confident that nothing ever shall be
done by me, either in word, in Sermon, that may be reck-
oned railing against them, or in any action that may be
deservedly censured a persecution of them: I cannot
suppose that a discovery of errors and failings, in a mo-
derate and in-offensive manner, which, peradventure

the Saints themselves may be guilty of, may therefore be reckoned a railing against, or persecuting of the Saines, and that therefore these Sermons, which are a discovery of such things, that without controversie were the practices of the many Antichrists, in the Apostles times, may not be so reckoned unlesse those that make application of these things to themselves, and thus censure them, will appropriate the name of Saint to themselves, (as many of them are too ready to doe) and thence conclude all discovery of their errours and failings to be a railing against, and persecuting of the Saints. But are not those that thus cry out against others for railing and persecution, herein themselves guilty of the same things, what more railing accusation can be brought against any then is by themselves thus ordinarily brought even against the most godly Ministers of the Word: in calling them railers and persecutors, and who art thou O man that thus judgest another, and thou thy self doest the same things! I cannot but wonder that those, who above all others would be reckoned Saints, should be so impatient under the words of reproofe or exhortation, should censure that for railing in others, which themselves are most guilty of, and would not have to be so censured in themselves: A small matter it seems will make these persons say they are persecuted, with whom a Ministers conscientious discharge of his duty in reprovng and discovering errours, is reckoned persecution. Is it not strange that Ministers should be denyed the liberty of their consciences, and in a lawfull exercise thereof be thus censured by those whose Religion doth so much consist in pleading for a generall liberty of conscience in it. As for my selfe in the generall course of my practice and Doctrine (in relation to those whom I judge to be
Saints

Saints of God , notwithstanding differences of judgement between us) these being now so much called in question and censured; although I should be but a foole in boasting, yet being now compelled unto it, I know you will beare with me in this my folly, this I can say for mine own life, that as before, so ever since I came to this place, upon that Doctrin of the Apostle given to the people of God that are of different judgements; in some things, *Phil. 3. 15, 16.* As many as are perfect will be thus minded, and if you thinke otherwise, God will reveale it to you, yet according to what we have obtained, let us walke by the same rule , and minde the same thing: It hath been my practice to hold communion with the people of God of different judgements , in things wherein we have agreed , reckoning nothing more unchristian then this , that the things wherein we differ should make us separate from each other in the things wherein we agree, and accordingly it hath beene mine indeavour to ingage all Christians to hold communion together , both publikely and privately in those things wherein they have agreed that so the common name of Christian, & things wherein we agree, might be more powerfull to unite us , then the dividing names of *Presbyterians & Independents, &c.* and things wherein we differ might be to dis-unite us, this hath bin my practice and endeavour, both before, and ever since I came to this place, & I trust in God ever shall be: And as for my Doctrin in my Sermons, this also I can say, that I have often exhorted unto these wayes of communion amongst Christians , that I have declined whatsoever I could judge might occasion offence and breach between them, that I have as much as in me lies , declined the handling of controversies, there being nothing I am more averse unto then making the Pulpit like a Cock-pit or Fencing-school,

school, as the manner of too many is, but have endeavoured to hold forth the Doctrine of the faithfull word, *through faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*: that I have not in any Sermons used the least word, whereby the name of Independents in particular should be rendered odious to the people, or themselves mis-represented in ought that I have spoken, nor have I in the least kinde engaged my selfe, in handling any one of these controversies concerning Church government, that are now depending with them, which yet I have not done, as if I held it altogether unlawfull so to doe; but because I have judged it unfit, and unexpedient for this place, wherein are many weake in the faith, unfit to be judged in such doubtfull disputations; some of different judgements, who I know would be little edified, but much offended by it, and whom I would therefore rather choose to reason with in private, but most disaffected to us, and the worke of reformation, among whom our failings and differences were no more to be published, then the falls of the Worthies of *Israel* to be proclaimed in *Gath* and *Askelon*, where the Philistims would rejoyce, and the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. And for the Anabaptists, with whom in wayes of difference I have here had most to doe, excepting what hath passed between us in private disputes: This I can say also, that in publike I have very seldome, scarce at all, mentioned the name of them, and the most and worst ever spoken by me concerning them, was in one Sermon upon this Text, preached after these I now present unto you, and all contained in these few words, *That my heart d'd tremble at the practice of the Anabaptists, that at one breath could un-church all the Churches in the World, who came not up to them in their opinions, that as a man could*
take

take it ill against himselfe the injury done to his wife, much
more would Christ the injury done to his Churches that are
espoused and married to him. And that I did therefore
looke on this as the cause why this way above all others
was so much blasted, none given up to fall into so many
and dangerous errors, as they for this wrong and injury
done by them to the Churches, but otherwise even when
I have had occasion to speake concerning infant baptism,
I have delivered my judgement and grounds onely in
these never taking notice of them, as adversaries unto it,
or mentioning any controversie at all about it: And this
hath been my endeavour, that I might performe things
in-offensively, and might take off from men all occasion
of such reports which I knew to be cast on others, as al-
so that wherein they boast, viz. their moderation to-
wards those that are of different judgements, they might
be found even as I, and I therein be nothing inferiour to
them. And of these things have I thus made bold to
make representation to your Honours, (being able to call
God and men, yea even mine adversaries themselves to
witnesse concerning the truth of them, whether these
things are so or no) having understood what strange and
contrary reports have been brought unto diverse of you,
that hereby I might somewhat apologize for my self, be-
ing necessitated thus hereunto, as also that I might de-
fire your Honours to enquire into the truths of these
things in particular, & not to entertain generall ground-
lesse reports that are contrary hereunto. But for these
Sermons, whence these reports have had their rise, the
occasion of them being taken from hence, although they
are thus represented by men, yet doe I believe they will
one day be owned by God, and I cannot but acknow-
ledge my selfe ingaged to stand to the owning of them,
yea,

yea, so far am I from being ashamed of what I have delivered in them, or of being sorry for the preaching of them, that notwithstanding all the reproches cast on me by reason of them, yet shall I say as *Job*, in a like case, *Chap. 31. 36. That should mine adversaries have written a Booke against me, I would take it upon my shoulder, and binde it as a Crown unto me.* Yet notwithstanding the desire I have with patience to undergoe all these false reports, censures and reproches cast upon my selfe, yet the aspersing of the things delivered in these Sermons, hath above all gone neereſt unto me, so that I could not but have thoughts in me of endeavouring a vindication of them from such mis-representations, and of my selfe also thereby. But so publike have the reports been, and into so many places have they been carryed, that no way hath been left me in a private manner (as I should chiefly have desired) to doe it, that I have therefore been necessitated to entertain thoughts of publishing them, that so the vindication may be answerably as publike, and to harken to the importunity of many of my friends for the printing of them, as the onely way left to free my selfe and them from these obloquies thus cast on us. Thus then at length I have consented unto, and undertaken, as the onely means of this so necessary a vindication of my self, hoping that this liberty of publishing them cannot be denyed me after such provocations, and such a necessity calling me thereunto, nor questioning also, but that being now published, they will sufficiently speake for themselves, with all intelligent persons that shall diligently read, and impartially wey the things delivered in them, to the removing of that cloud of reproch now cast upon them, yet withall hoping that as abundant testimony was given to them by many Godly persons

sons that heard them, so that some benefit also may come to those who without prejudice shall read them, and likewise glory to God; as well as vindication to my selfe by them, the which shall be to me an abundant satisfaction of all the labour I have taken herein, and is the onely reward I expect from them.

I have endeavoured as much as in mee lyes to keepe to the very phrase and words wherein these things were first delivered, that so there might be as little alteration, as possible in this publication of them, I have not here written to engage my self in any Controversie, to write against others, thereby to provoke them to write against me, nor have I at present thoughts of appearing againe by way of Reply for farther vindication to any (if any such there shall be) that shall endeavour in Print to cast any farther slur on what is here conteined.

And now, to whom should I dedicate these my poor labours but unto your selves, Honourable Gentlemen, unto whom, next unto the Lord Jesus Christ I owe my self, and all that I have; unto whom, I stand in so many favours received from you, and so many ways, engaged: who were pleased when I was but a stranger in your Country, yer first of all to pitch your eyes of favour on mee, to be the first chosen by you to be settled for the Ministeriall work here in *Winchester*, as also to own me, (unworthy of so great a favour) by your so generall and unanimous appearing in my behalf at the Assembly of Divines, when some obstructions were there laid to my settling here; kindneses, never to be forgotten; besides many others that I have received from you, from time to time; In the hearing of divers of you were these Sermons preached, whose constant residence here, hath bin and is a great encouragement unto me, and to whom I must

must acknowledge my self, many ways obliged, and to
divers of you who have not your constant residence
here, have these mis-representations been brought, so
that I hope my boldnesse in this Dedication will be the
more excusable. My humble desire is, that, (may it stand
with your many weighty affairs in your publike employ-
ments) you would vouchsafe the reading hereof, where-
in I hope unto your selves the time will not be ill, nor
altogether unprofitably spent, no otherwise shall I desire
of you any patronage hereof, then as the matters herein
contained shall appear to you to be truths, and not from
a spirit of contention but of Christian moderation to
have proceeded. My humble desire also shall be in be-
half of my self, for the continuance of that favour and
respect I have hitherto received from you, which to mee
will be a very great encouragement in that worke of the
Ministry, to which in this place I have been called by
you; A conſeionable endeavour wherein I know to be
that onely which is expected by you, and to be that a-
lone which remainys to mee, whereby I may be able to
manifest and testifie my thankfulnessse to you. And for
your selves, That the Lord would direct you in your
publique endeavours, would guide you by his Spirit into
the ways of truth, would make you faithfull and zealous
for his cause, would recompence to you abundantly your
labour of love shewn to my self, and to many others of
the poore servants of Christ, and make you instruments
of much good, both unto the Kingdome and unto this
County; shall ever be, the constant and most hearty
prayers of

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Your most humble and affectionate
servant in Christ Jesus,

Humphry Ellis.



TWO SERMONS

Preached at

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WINCHESTER.

I JOHN 2. 18.

Little children, it is the last time, and as you have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.

Beloved Christians, I have already in this place and in your hearing, gone over the former part of this Epistle and Chapter, and am now come to this 18th. verse in this second Chapter now read unto you: you have already heard this Chapter to have been divided into five parts, containing so many severall exhortations with the arguments whereby they are enforced, and whereby the Apostle presseth on us all the use of that doctrine delivered in the former Chapter of this Epistle.

The first exhortation being to stir us up to the study of holiness, and to the hatred of sin, which is so contrary to the nature of God and our Christian profession, as the Apostle describes it to be, from the first verse to the 9th.

The second exhortation is from ver. 9. to ver. 15. wherein the

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former exhortation to the study of holinesse in general, and to a respect to all the commandments of God to doe them, is contracted into this one of Brotherly love; which is the fulfilling of the Law, and in which all the other Commandments are summed up, *ἀγαπητοῦται*, Epitomised, *Rom. 13. 8, 9.* and which all are pressed to follow after in this second exhortation.

3 The third exhortation is from the 15th. to the 18th. *verse*, whereby we are admonished to take heed to our selves, that our hearts be not set on the world and the things thereof, the profits, pleasures, honours of it, which are these severall lusts mentioned, *ver. 16.* and which we are here admonished not to love, least thereby we manifest the love of the father not to be in us.

4 The fourth exhortation begins in this 18th. *ver.* and continues to the 29th. wherein by many arguments we are pressed diligently to take heed to our selves, that by the policy of deceivers, false teachers, teaching contrary to the truth, we be not led away from the simplicity of the Gospel, but that we abide steadfast in the profession and witness of the faith, and obedience of the truth delivered to us.

5 This Chapter is closed up with an exhortation again to holinesse, begun in the last verse of this, and more largely prosecuted in the third, the following Chapter.

Having gone over the three former parts or exhortations of this Chapter, I now come unto the fourth, begun in this 18th. *verse* now read unto you, wherein two things are to be observed.

1 The persons to whom this exhortation is directed in this word *ἡσδία*, Little children.

2 The matter contained in this verse, and that is twofold.

1 A proposition, *it is the last time.*

2 The proof or confirmation of it; *You have heard Antichrist shall come, &c. whereby we know it is the last time,* and both these together with the former of the persons in the words (*little children*) as they lye in the Text, are as severall arguments, to be made use of, to presse this exhortation on us, To take heed to our selves, that by the policy of false teachers, we be not perverted and turned aside from the simplicity of the Gospel.

The first of these particulars in the word *ἡσδία*, Little children, hath been already spoken unto in *ver. 13.* where all Christians, according to their severall degrees in Christianity, are ranked into these three degrees, of *Fathers, Young men, and Little children,* there

there being in those that are borne again and become new creatures, a growing from grace to grace, a proceeding from one degree of grace to another, as it is in the naturall life, and that in degrees also somewhat answerable, as of infancie, youth, and old age, which men in the course of nature doe passe through, and so having already shown, that the new borne babes, those young beginners in Christianity, that are not able to relish the strong meat, the deepe things of the Word of God, but have need to be fed with milke, the beginning of the doctrine of Christ, and first principles of the Oracles of God, to be meant both there and here also in the word, *Little children*, and the severall particulars wherein the comparison will hold between them, for which they may be so called, I forbear to speake of it here again, but shall refer you to what hath been spoken concerning it in that 13th. verse, onely before I passe hence to the next perticular, I may not forget to mention this one thing, as not altogether unworthy of your observation, *viz.* That the word *Little children*, being taken in this sence, we consider how well this exhortation is suited and besited to such that is here given by the Apostle; for after the Apostles mention of these three, *Fathers, Young men, and Little children*, his endeavour is, to fit each of them with exhortations most suitable and proper to their condition, and therefore *Fathers* and *Young men* are again mentioned, *ver. 14.* and that by themselves, without the mention of *Little children*, to be there as in the former verse joyned with them, because the exhortation given in, *ver. 15, 16, 17. of not loving the world and the things thereof*, is especially directed to them, as most suitable to their condition, who ought to set their affections on things above, as *Fathers* and *strong men* in religion, to seek the honours that come from God above, the pleasures of his right hand, and the profits which come from him, who is the God who teacheth to profit, and not these vanities and vain lusts and fashions of this present World, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and pride of life, which the fathers and young men of this World do seek after. But lest we should think the *little children* because not mention'd with them to be wholly forgotten, he here comes to them in perticular, with an exhortation very suitable to them also, For who in so much danger of being cozened & deceived as *little children*; Cheaters of all others will chuse to deal with children, who as they suppose, with painted trifles may be cheated of their

Jude 4.

2 Pet. 2.3.

chiefest jewels, and with feigned flutering words may be stoln a way from their parents, and therefore parents when they know such to be abroad, will have speciall care of their children, and if they commit any thing of worth to them, will strictly charge them, to take heed they be not coozened of it; So here; *she saith once given to the Saints*, as Jude speaks, is a most precious jewell, to every one of his children doth God commit it, and to every one of them, God sayth, as Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. 6. 20. *O Timothy, keep that, that is committed to thee, keep it and lose it not, that thou mayst say, thou hast kept the faith: keep it to the coming of the Lord, Verse 14.* Now the Lord knoweth that there are Cheaters abroad that would rob his children, & coozen them of this jewel, *Deceivers*, wandring Rogues, as the word *μαρτυροι*, given to *false teachers*, as 2 John 7. doth signifie, *and there are many such now in the world*, many *and pederasts*, *men-stealers*, that would steal the children from their parents, from God their heavenly Father, by the immortall seed of whose Word, they have been newly begotten, from the *Jerusalem* above the Church of the living God, their Mother, by whom they have bin brought forth, whose breasts they have suckled, and upon whose knees they have been dandled; from the Ministers of the Gospel, their spirituall Fathers, who have begotten them in the Gospel, and might say of them as Jacob of his children to his brother Esau, Gen. 33. 5. *These are the children which God hath graciously given his servant*; The Lord knowing these coozening companions *to be in way to deceive*, and that they have their *wisdom* *abyss*, feigned, sugred words as wee call them, whereby they labour to steal his children from him; they as well as any Cheaters have their faire promises of liberty, whereby they seek to answer them, 2 Pet. 2. 19. The Lord also knowing that their principall dealing is with unstable souls, with his *little children* whom hee feeds with his milk, That are as yet scarce able to discern the subtillties of their deceits, they cun or think by their chaff to catch the old birds, by their policy to prevail against the fathers and young men, and therefore they wholly deale with the *little children*, whom they judge least able to withstand them. So that the *little children*, being of all in most danger, most liable to these temptations, how suitable is this exhortation to them, and how well doth it becom the Apostle John here, and every spirituall Father, to look to their *little ones*, and frequently to give such reasonable, suitable exhortations.

rations as this unto them, *Little children, it is the last time, Little children, take heed you be not deceived.*

Let it suffice to have at this time, thus briefly noted this, because I shall hereafter take occasion to speake farther unto that; but I now proceed to the next thing, the matter contained in the Text written to these *Little children*, and first with the proposition, *it is the last time*, *ἡ ἔσχατος ὥρα ἐστίν*, from this word *ὥρα* here in the Text comes also the Latine, *hora*, and our word *houre*, and this word though rendred time, yet is most frequently used to signifie that small space or part of time wee call an *houre*, into 24 of which our day naturall is divided, and I know not any other word, the Greeks have to expresse an *houre* by save this word *ὥρα*; yet not any translation, that I have seen do render it here by this word (*houre*) save the vulgar Latine, and the Rheimists following them; they render it, *novissima hora* *last*, it is the last *houre*; all others besides that I have seen keep this word time, *ultimum tempus adest*, *Bezæ*: the Syriack hath ܡܕܝܬܐ, which *Tremelius* renders answering the Greek, (*ad litteram*) *tempus est ultimum*, and so is the word most frequently used, both in the old and new Testament, for time as well as that peticular space of time an *houre*, so in the old Testament is it made to answer the Hebrew *שעה*, as in *Hosea* 2.8. *I will take my corn* *שעה*, in the time of it, the Seventy, *שעה* *אחרונה*, so also to *שעה*, to note the season of time to answer to *נאסף*. *Numb. 9.2. Let the children of Israel keep the Passover, שעה* in the appointed season, which was the 14th day of their month *Abib*: this the Seventy also render by *ὥρα*: *אחרונה* *שעה*; so also it is taken in the new Testament, *John 4.21. The houre commeth the time*, the season now is; this is the opportunity, and so I shall take that for time as it is rendred here; and do look on that, to signifie in this use of it any determinate space of time (besides an *houre* for which it is most frequently used) yet that shall shortly come to passe, and is neer to be accomplished. *ἐστίν*, it is, not there is a last *houre*, meaning to come, but it is, this present time, is the last time, as the latter part of the Verse cleers is: *wherby was known it is the last time.*

I need not raise any other observation, but take the words as they lye, the Apostle so expressly affirming in them concerning his times, *that they were the last times*, onely I shall make this enquiry into them; that seeing so many Centuries of yeeres have been ex-

pired since the Apostles writing of this Epistle, of what and in what sence this can be truly sayd, that even that present time, whereof he spake to be the last time.

Know then that of necessity something is to be understood, to which these words are related, the duration whereof is measured by time, and the end whereof, is now drawing nigh, and approaching, and so in respect whereof, *it is called the last time*; and that must be eyther of *Jerusalem*, or of the World, for a third thing I have not heard to have been discovered by any, to which these words should be related.

I Some judge the Apostle to call *even that present time, the last time*, in respect of *Jerusalem*, whose end was now very neer, and the day of whose destruction (as our Saviour speaks *Luke 21.20.*) was indeed approaching; and so they judge the Apostle herein, to respect the little Calender of time (as some call it) of *Daniels 70 weeks*, or *490 years, Dan. 9.24.* wherein is prophesied as well the destruction of the City and Sanctuary, by the spreading of abominations (or the wing of abominations, *כנף אבמה*, *per legiones detestationum*, as *Junius* renders it, the word wing metaphorically put for Armies; as we say the wing of an Army, which wing of abominations, was none other but the Armies of the Romans, by whom the abomination making desolate, was made to stand in the holy place; the encompassing of *Jerusalem* by whole Armies is made by our Saviour in the fore-alleged place, *Luke 21.20.* the neer approaching signe of the destruction of it) as the consuming of the Covenant by the cutting off of the *Messiah* by death; and the time of the one as well as the other to be therein noted: And the ground of this opinion is, that this Apostle being one of those to whom the Apostleship of the Circumcision was committed, is looked on principally to intend the instruction of the Jews in this Epistle, to whom this prophecy was given, and who were instructed by it of the time of the coming of the *Messiah*, and the destruction of their City to follow neer upon it; among whom many (though believing in Christ) did still remayn zealous of the Law, *Acts 21.20.* who were much staggered and shaken in their faith (especially the *little ones* here mentioned in the text, by the standing of *Jerusalem* and the Temple in the present glory thereof, and the services of worship as yet there, according to the Law performed: as the present standing and glory of *Rome*, boasted of by the Romanists, is made an occasion

cation of stumbling too many weak Christians: And as the destruction of *Rome* shall one day be, a great confirmation to us in the truth delivered and received by us concerning Antichrist; so the destruction of *Jerusalem*, which they could not but look for, having been so plainly foretold, by *Daniel* and our Saviour, could not but be a great confirmation to them, in the faith they had received concerning Christ their *Messiah*, that hee was already come, who must come before that destruction of their City, and he to be the Christ preached to them in the Gospel, and a true Prophet, as who had also foretold them of it, this I say is by some judged to be the meaning of this, and so when the Apostles sayth, *Little children*, it is the last houre, to be as if he should have said, *Little children*, that as yet seem to be weak in the faith, to be much staggered in your mindes by reason of the present standing of *Jerusalem*, whether this be the Christ or no, that you have received: yet be not shaken by it, know the destruction of it is neere, this is the last time or houre; the last time of it foretold by the Prophet *Daniel* in his prophecy of the seventy Weeks wherein you shall see what was foretold, by *Daniel* and our Saviour concerning it to be fulfilled on it: whereby also you shall be abundantly strengthened and confirmed in your faith, that the *Messiah* is indeed come, and that this is the Christ whom we have preached unto you. He that will see more of this, let him consult with Master *Meder* learned Treatise of the Apostasie of the latter times, pag. 85. where it is more largely handled: against this opinion I must acknowledge my self to have little to object; yet.

The second opinion, of others that understand the Apostle to call his time *the last time* in respect of the world (*the last time* that is of the world) is that which I am most enclined unto, and shall take most especiall notice of at this time; it being that which is followed by most of the Interpreters which I have had opportunity to see, and which will afford most profitable instructions to us, and yet very consonant also to the Scriptures, which usually call the times reaching from Christs first to his second coming, the last days or times, or the end of the world, *Heb. 1. 2.* In these last days God hath spoken to us by his Son: thus the time of Christs preaching is said to be, ἐν ἰσχυρί τῶν ἡμερῶν: & so is his suffering said to be, ἐν στυγερῇ αἰῶνος, in the end of the world, *Heb. 9. 26.* and the ends of the world, that is, the times of the ends of the world is said to have come upon us, *1. Cor. 10. 11.* all which severall places.

Quest.

places are the same with this of *John* here in the text, it is the last time. But you will then ask, why or in what sence this large space of time, which hath already run out above 16 Centuries of yeers, should be thus called by *John* the last time, by *Paul* the last days, and end or ends of the World.

Ans. 1.

These times may be called the last times, because they are the times of the last Monarchy, or Kingdome of the World, that should rise, and that hath risen, or shall rise in the World, for understanding whereof let us have recourse to *Daniels* great Calendar of time, calculated for the Meridian of the World; I mean that prophecy of his in Chap. 2. wherein the Image shewn to *Nebuchadnezzar* in his Dream, and forgotten by him, is again revealed by *Daniel* and the interpretation thereof made known unto him; and therein the times and state of the World, under the severall Kingdoms that should rise in it, are made known to us; so that this serves for the World, as that mentioned in the former particular, (*viz.*) that of the seventy Weeks called the lesser Calendar, serves for that Kingdome and Common-wealth of the *Jews*, and shews the end of it: In this vision of the Image interpreted to *Nebuchadnezzar*, is there mention of foure Monarchies or Kingdoms, three of them to rise after his own, the first, that of the *Babylonian* in the head of gold, should be broken, the second or next Kingdom to it that of the *Medes* and *Persians*, to whom the Kingdom should be given, when it was translated from him and his; whose Kingdome is noted in the armes and breſt of silver; this Kingdome of the *Medes* and *Persians*, is that which is signified in another vision of *Daniel*, Chap. 8. 3, 4. By the Ram with two hornes, before whom no Beast no Kingdome, was able to stand, for of them it is interpreted ver. 20. After this comes up the third Kingdome, that of the *Grecians*, noted by the belly and thighes of the beast, and this that he-goat mentioned also, Chap. 8. 5. Which by the first King thereof (signified by the great horns betweene its eyes) *Alexander* overthrew the Ram, the Kingdom of the *Medes* and *Persians*, and at length himself being suddenly broken in his place came up four other horns, noting the dividing of his Kingdom to the four winds of heaven, and the four Kingdoms of *Egypt*, for the South, *Syria*, of the North, *Macedonia* for the West and the lesser *Asia* to the East, which should arise to his four Captains *Ptolomeus*, *Seleucus*, *Cassander*, and *Antigonus*, after he in the height of his Victories should be broken

broken off, and so the Kingdom taken from him, yet must this third Kingdom as well as the former (according to the everlasting ordination of God, with whom Kingdomes as well as particular persons have their periods of time assigned, to which they must be subject) be also broken, and all the strength of it surrendered into the hands of the fourth Monarchy or Kingdom of *Rome*. This is the fourth Kingdom *Daniel* speaks of *Chap. 2. 40.* represented by the iron legs of the Image; and feet of it, part of iron and part of clay; which at first was but one single Imperiall State, as the legs without mixture are all of iron; like iron breaking in pieces the strength of all the other Kingdomes; so that none is able to stand before it; yet at length as the first great horn in the Goat was broken, four others upon the same beast arise in the stead of it, which are altogether reckoned but one beast or Kingdom; so this Imperiall iron State of *Rome*, comes also at length to be so broken, that ten petty Kingdomes arise out of it, and within another State, an Ecclesiasticall or Spirituall State of *Rome*, to arise, (*viz.*) the Popedome, the second beast which *John* saw rising out of the earth, both which make but one Kingdom; the second State of the fourth Kingdom, represented by the feet with the ten toes, which are part of iron and part of clay; for the beast out of the Sea, and the beast out of the earth, Empire and Popedome; the beast and false prophet, the beast and whore that rides it, doe together make up but one Kingdom of *Rome*, which is here represented by the iron and clay in the feet of the Image; and yet is not reckoned another Kingdom from that Imperiall iron State of it, represented by the legs of iron, but still one Kingdom with it, for *Daniel* still speaks of it as of one Kingdom, *Dan. 2. 41.* though under another state and forme of it, this is that fourth ten horned, terrible, strong beast, with his iron teeth that breakes and stamper all under feet; *Dan. 7. 7.* this is the fourth Kingdom that should arise, the last in the Image, for in this, it is on its feet, whereon it goeth to destruction; and the last that shall arise in the World, for after this no more Monarchies we read of, no other worldly Kingdom to be rayled, to which the strength of this is to be given, as the strength of all the other Kingdomes, was surrendered to this; but it is destroyed by the stone, cut out without hands, by *Christ* in his appearance, by the brightness of his second coming; abolishing this man of sin: *Christ* is compared to a stone, and upon whomsoever this stone shall fall, it shall grind

Dan. 2. 34.

Medes Apost. p. 82.

Revel. 13. 12.

Revel. 17.

Luke 20. 28.

grind him to powder; so it shall this Image notwithstanding the strength of it; for when he in his second coming shall come to fall upon the feet of it; all the iron, clay, brasie, silver, and gold, all the Kingdoms represented by these; and the glory and strength of them, shall be broken in pieces together; and become as the chaffe of the Summer floore. And unto this time or rather end of time, shall this fourth and last Kingdome (which we see to have remained to this time, and in the last divided State of it, to be now acting his part in the world) continue; for as *Daniel* shews, *Chap. 7. 21, 22.* the little horn, the Popedome, rising among the ten horns is said to make war with the Saints untill the coming of the ancient of days, and the judgment given to the Saints of the most high; *then shall this beast be slaine; and his body be given to the burning flame, v. 11.* The Lord shall indeed do with this wicked Kingdome as with *Egypt*, (which this is spiritually said to be) how many plagues poured he on them, yet the full deliverance of his people, and their great destruction, was not till their overthrow in the waters; So will the Lord also on this wicked Kingdome, poure out those Vials of his judgment, mentioned, *Revel. 16.* and which in every days experience wee see poured on them; yet the last and great destruction of it is, not but by the fire of the great day, *when beast and false prophet shall be cast alive into the lake of fire; Revel. 19. 20.* even as those Saints of God, at the same time alive on the earth, are taken up alive to meet the Lord in the ayre; or but by the seventh and last vial of wrath, when it shall be said, it is done; when Islands shall flye away, and the mountains not be found, *Revel. 16. 20;* nor till the sounding of the seventh and last Trumpet, when time shall be no more, *Revel. 10. 6.* when the dead shall rise incorruptible, *1 Cor. 15. 52.* when also the third and last great wo is poured upon the enemies of God, *Revel. 17. 14, 15.* Thus we see this fourth Kingdome, to be the last Kingdome on earth, and the time of it, to reach even to the end of time.

See Medes
Apost. p. 69.

And from hence it is that the *last times* have their denomination, and are so called; the times of the other Kingdoms, before the rise of this last, cannot be called the *last times*, nor is any thing done in them sayd to be done in the *last times*; we read in the Prophets of great things to be done in the *last times*; Christ to come, and suffer, and raise his Kingdome. In the *last days* the mountain of the Lord to be exalted; and the Law to go forth of *Sion* *Isaiah, 2. 2.* In the *last days* the Spirit of the Lord to be poured out in so plentiful a

in manner; for so that **JOHN** of **Jew**, (that afterwards) **Joh**
2.28. is expounded by **Peter**, **Acts. 2.17.** it shall be in **extrema**
tempus, and the new Testament, shews these things to have been
done, in the last days and end of the world; by what then shall the
last times be known wherein these things were to be done, by our
Saviour? How shall we know these things done by our Saviour, to
have been indeed done in the last time, and not before it? by this,
they were done in the times of this last Kingdome; from whence
the times are so called the last times; in which they were prophesied
by **Daniel** to be done, **Dan. 2. 44.** Thus are the times to point out,
the things that are to be done in them; thus those that lived in those
former ages, seeing the decay of the **Græcian** and rise of the last, the
Roman Monarchy; might then see the last times to be come upon
them, in which they were to look for the coming of Christ, and the
great things to be done by him, and thus (that I may at length con-
clude this first particular) is Christ said to *speake in the last days*,
Heb. 1. 1. *to suffer in the end of the world*, **Heb. 9. 26.** *are the ends*
of the world said to be come on us. **1 Cor. 10.** and doth **John** call his
time the last time, because it is the time of the last Kingdome (God
in his great Calender dividing the times, by these Kingdomes) by
which the last times are measured, so that they begin and end with
it; the time whereof, shall reach to the end of time, even till time
shall be no more.

But let mee give another reason, for these times of the Apostle,
and all preceding them, to be called the last times, and that taken
from Gods dispensations towards his Church, as the former was
from his dispensations towards the Kingdomes of the world; By
his dispensations towards his Church; I mean the administrations of
his Covenant to them. His Covenant of grace whereby hee dis-
penseth life and salvation to his people ever since the beginning, the
first promise made to **Adam**, of the seed of the woman, **Christ**, to
break the head of the Serpent the Devill, unto the time of the end,
and for ever, hath been, and shall remayn one and the same for the
substance of it: **Jesus Christ** who is yesterday to day, and the same for
ever, being given for a Covenant to us by faith, in whose name alone
(which is the substance of the Covenant) all the fathers even from
the beginning were well reported of, and saved, embracing the pro-
mise of life made in him, by faith, **Heb. 11.** Yet respect wee Christ
to come, and Christ as already manifested, the administrations of

this one Covenant, are different before Christ was exhibited, in all the time of the world, from *Adam* unto Christ, the administration was not so clear, as that we have since Christ was manifested to us; and though there may some difference be made in the former times, by reason of severall administrations, as of the time from *Adam* to *Abraham*, from that which followed after; as with *Abraham* first God dealing in the way of a Covenant.

Of the time from *Abraham* to *Moses*, from that which followed after him unto Christ, God by *Moses*, giving the Law, and those many ordinances of Worship (types of good things to come) that were annexed to it, yet may we call all the times from Christ backward to the beginning of the world, the first time, wherein all was in types and shadows, and this first time to continue till Christ and the new administration by him: all the *Mosaicall* Ordinances were but to continue untill the time of reformation, *Heb.* 9. 10. that is unto Christ, as it is expounded, *Gal.* 3. 24. so that all the time of this first administration, from the beginning to Christ, we may from thence call the first time, and is called in Scripture *the beginning of the world*, from the first period of them; as *Heb.* 9. 26. he ought often to have suffered from the foundation of the world, calling these first times so from their beginning, then, and thereby distinguishing them, from these *last times*; But by Christ, we have a new administration, which is not to give place to any other, to succeed it, as the former hath done to this, but is to continue ever to the end, to the coming of Christ, so said Christ to his Disciples, when hee instituted the Ministry, and gave them Commission to preach and baptize, *Lo, I am with you to the end of the world*, *Matth.* 28. 20. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper, is to shew forth his death till hee come; *1 Cor.* 11. 26. Timothy is charged to keep the Commandment till the coming of the Lord, *1 Tim.* 6. 14. which shews these Ordinances are to continue till then; the gifts given by Christ, for Pastors and Teachers in his Church; are to continue till wee all come, to the unity of faith and knowledge, *Ephes.* 4. 13. which all cannot do till the fulnesse of times, and the fulnesse of the body of Christ be come in at his coming; In all the times of the Church are these then to continue and untill the time of the end, and so because this is the last administration reaching to the end of the World, is all this, the time of it, called the *last time*, and the end of the world, so that by all this wee see, that the whole time of the

World may be divided into the first and last times, to either of which there is a fulnesse, the one at his first comming, whereby he ends the first times and first administrations, and the other at his second and last comming, whereby hee ends the last times and last administrations, which reach to the end of the World. And thus you see this of the Text cleared, that *John* calls his times, and so all the times reaching to the end, *the last times*, because they are the times of the last Kingdom, and the times of the last administration, either of which do, as you have heard reach to the end of the World.

Now to make way the better for the Application of this doctrine, and that the exhortations which will necessarily arise, from this consideration of *the last times*, may be the more pressing upon us: let us consider these two particulars following.

That the whole space of the time of *these last times*, though it hath contained these many hundreds of yeers, that have already run out from the time of Christ to this present, and shall contain all that time, that is yet remayning to his second comming, is yet reckoned in the Scripture to be a very short time; The last word Christ, leaves with his Church is to assure it, as well as that he will come again, so that hee will come quickly, *Revel. 22. 20.* It shall not be long to the time of his comming it shall be quickly, *Behold*, sayth he, *I come quickly and my reward is with mee, Revel. 22. 12.* See, *Heb. 10. 37.* Yet a little while, and hee that commeth will come, and will not tarry. He that commeth here mentioned is Christ, who calls him-

self by the same name. *ἐρχομαι*, *he that is to come, Revel. 1. 8.* Luke 12. 45. *He will come, hee will certainly come, hee will not tarry, ἔρχεται, hee will not defer or delay his comming, so a long time*, as the word signifies: this some think him to do, *The foolish servant said, my master delays his comming, ἔρχεται ἔρχεται* (using the same word) *he tarrys, he defers his comming to a long time*, And the effect of it with him was, that hee gave himself to all licentiousnesse in sin, to eat and drink with the drunken, and beat his fellow-servants, and his Lord comes on him sodainly to his destruction; the sleeping of the Virgins was, because they thought the time long, and the Bridegroom to delay his comming; *ἔρχεται ἔρχεται* *he doth not tarry, he doth not delay*; and though men may peradventure say, he will indeed come, nor will hee delay it beyond the appointed time, yet is the vision for a long time, for many days; the Apostle takes thus off in the beginning of the Verse, saying, *Yet a little.*

little while, ἐν ὀλίγῳ, but that is not all, though we render not, nor can very well render any more, the Originall hath somewhat more, ὁ ὅρ' ὁ ὅρ', *quantulumcunque*, as who would say, how much soever it is, yet is it but a *short time*, the seventy Interpreters use the expression, to note a *moment*, a very little space of time; *Isai. 26. 20.* *hide thy self as it were for a little moment*, עַד שְׁעָבָב the seventy ὁ ὅρ' ὁ ὅρ', so may we here understand the expression, 'as of such a little momentary space of time, yet a little while, yet as it were a moment of time, hee that cometh will come, it is but as it were a moment of time to his coming. Thus Paul who calls the afflictions of these last times the sufferings, τὸ ὧν καί πο, *Rom. 8. 18.* doth yet call them momentary afflictions, *2 Cor. 4. 17.* because of the shortness of these last times, thus it is plain that the Scriptures reckons the whole of these last times, to be but short. And to may they well be reckoned, not only in respect of God, with whom a thousand years, are but as one day (by which the Apostle Peter stops the mouths of the mockers of the last times, that say, where is the promise of his coming? proving by it, that though it seem long and to be delayed to them, yet it is not so to God, and that in this which they call delaying; Doth God shew forth his patience and long suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repent once, *2 Pet. 3. 8. 9.*)

But also in respect of the time past, and in comparison of that; what though we reckon somewhat above 1600 yeeres, yet what is this to almost foure Millenaries of yeeres; the times of the first time; and we cannot think these last times to continue centuries of yeeres more, when in our own age already, wee see so many signes of the approaching end, fulfilled; so as the number of the Godly are great in themselves, more than can be numbered, *Revel. 7. 9.* are yet a small number, a little flock in comparison of the wicked: So these times, however they may seem long in themselves, are yet but short in comparison of the first times, when compared with them. Thus wee see this first particular proved, that the last times are but short; A consideration suitable to the text, for therefore John expresseth it by the word ὥρα, ὥρα, it is the last houre, that word when it is used for time, yet noting a short space of time, as Paul sayth to the Thessalonians, *1 Thess. 2. 17.* So may Christ say of his cernorall presence now separated from us, that it is but, ὀλίγον ὥρας for a short time, as Paul there useth the word. A continuation also profitable to us, we see those that think the time long

Parum upon
this text, Jo-
annes dicit ul-
timam horam,
respectu habito,
ad tempora re-
tro elapsa, qui-
bus duratione
non responde-
bunt ea: ne ad
finem usque su-
perant.

On Hebr. 9. 26.

and

and to be delayed walk after their own lusts, as those mockers of the last times do, 2 Pet. 3. 3. But the consideration of this, that it is short, and but a little time, will quicken us up to the practice of the things, which (as you shall by and by heare) we are exhorted unto upon this ground in the Scripture, and will make us, not to faint in our minds, nor be weary of wayting our Masters coming, but as they, Heb. 11. 13. to be still eying of the promises, perswaded of them, by faith embracing them, seeing them by faith, in a short space of time, ready to be fulfilled on us, which otherwise to sence, would seem far off unto us.

The second particular is, that our times, the times wherein wee now live, and the last part of these last times. This that the whole time is but short; and yet we reckoning 1646 years already past, may easily evince this to us, that wee are in the last part of them, That wee may say, si Apostoli tempora fuerunt saculi consummatio, quanto magis hac nostra. If the Apostles times were called the end of the world, by them, how much more these times of ours: Par. on Heb. 9. 26. But I intend somewhat more then this, in this particular to present to your consideration for proofe, that our times are the last part of the last times; understand then; That though the Apostles lived and wrote in these last times (and called their own times, with those that should follow, the last times; Yet spake often of a last times to come, which I call here the last times of the last times, and as firme them to come upon us. Thus Paul speaks, 1 Tim. 4. 1. in ultiois temporis, in the latter times, as being yet in these last times to come, 2 Tim. 3. 1. In the last days shall be troublesome times, so 2 Pet. 3. 3. in the last days shall come mockers; and Jude also, verse 18th. of his Epistle. The whole time of the world is (as you have heard) divided into the first and last times, which these are; These last times againe have the like division; and as by this you may perceive, have first and last part to them also: But you will say; by what are these severall parts of the last times to be distinguished? how may it be known that we are in the last part of these last times? Surely by the same last Kingdom; whereby the last times themselves are known are these severall parts of it also, to be known and distinguished. You have heard these times to be called the last times, for this as one and the chiefe reason of it; because they are the times of the last Kingdom, that should rule, that hath risen, or that shall rise in the world; Now as by consulting with Daniel, we found what this last Kingdome or Monarchy was (to wit)

wit) the Roman, by the rising whereof the last times were to be known, so by consulting with *Daniel* again, wee shall finde this last Kingdom to be divided into two parts. Yet still reckoned as one Kingdom, *Dan. 2. 33.* where the fourth Kingdom is noted by the legs of iron, and the feet part of iron, and part of clay; there are the severall parts of this one Kingdome, the first is all iron, represented by the legs of iron, presenting the Imperiall State of *Rome*; the first rising whereof did point out the last times; in the latter part, there is some thing of iron remaining, yet mixt with clay; so that it is a divided State, and notes that divided State of *Rome*, which should rise after the breach of the Empire; wherein should be some thing of the iron part, (the Empire remaining) but now mixt with clay, another part, the Popedom, this Saint *John* speaks of, *Revel. 17. 9. 10.* interpreting the seven heads of the beatt, which hee saw, to be as well seven Kings, that is, kinds of Kingly government, as seven mountains or hills whereon the woman sitteth, whereon *Rome* the great City, that then did beare rule over the Kings of earth, was built; And of these seven Kings, hee notes five to have falne already, five former kinds of Government, that had beene in *Rome*, viz. the Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decem-viri, Triumviri, one is the sixth head, or Imperiall State of *Rome*, the legs of iron, it is in *Johns* time, who lived in the first part of this Kingdome, before it came to be that State represented by the feet of iron and clay; which yet hee presently describes as to come, and speaking of the seventh head, which he calls the other, Hee sayth, it is not yet come, (viz.) that other State of that Empire or Kingdome, but *verse 11.* another is also spoken of, that is the eighth, which seems to be of another different kinde, which is the Ecclesiasticall Papall State of *Rome*, so differing from the seventh and all the former, that it seems to be an eighth; yet is one with the seventh, makes but one Kingdom with the seventh head of it: so that the last State of the Kingdom must be so divided and consist of two, the seventh head, and that that seems an eighth, yet is one with it, and is that which is noted by the mixture of iron, and clay in the feet of the Image; Thus then let us understand this, that the Empire of *Rome*, is the sixth head that was in *Johns* time, *Daniels* iron legs, and the first part of that Kingdom, and that must be removed before the next State of *Johns* seventh head of *Daniels* feet of iron and clay was to come, and is

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See PARAGON
Revel. 17. 10.

he that *Paul* speaks of, *2 Thess.* 2. 6, 7. That should let the rising of the *man of sin*, the Popedome, till he be taken out of the way; The last State of it is in the ten Kingdomes that should rise upon the breach of the Empire, that therefore the beast is represented with ten horns which then were not, Had not received their Kingdome in *Johns* time, but should rise afterwards to be the last head, upon the breach of the Empire; in which is some thing of iron, something of the strength of the Empire, but now mixt with clay, another State, of the Popedome, that seemed an eighth, yet is reckoned one with it; rising with and (like the *little horn*, *Dan.* 7. 8.) among the ten horns or Kingdoms, and ruling all of them as the ten horned beast is ruled by the Whore that rides it. This is to be the last State of this last Kingdom, the feet of iron and clay in *Daniel*.

Now consider that as these last times are so called from this Kingdom, so this severall state of this kingdom, makes this division of the last times. And so when the Apostles speak of *last days*, or latter times to come, they call them so, as being the times of this latter part of this last kingdom; The times of the Apostasie from the faith, and *revealing of the man of sin*, *2 Thess.* 2. 3. and therefore as he that saw the rayfing of the Empire, the iron legs, might as you have heard see *the last time comming upon them*, so these that see the breaking of that Empire the rayfing of many Kingdoms out of it, and the rise of the Papacy, that revelation of *the man of sin*, might see the latter part of these *last times* to be comming on them, and themselves to live in them. And now consider, do not wee see? are not our times the latter part of *the last times*, how little now remainys of that great body of the *Roman* Empire; to keep the name of it? somewhat of iron, yet but a little; wee live not in the times wherein it was broken, yet may wee see it hath been by the many Kingdoms now standing in *Europe*, which did rise upon the wounding of it, which by some are exactly reduced to the number of ten, that rose at every time of the breach of it, do not wee see how for some hundred of yeares, the Papacy hath ruled all? the *man of sin* therein to have been revealed, what can wee conclude lesse, from these things that are so manifest before our eyes, but that it is indeed the last part of the last Kingdom, the feet (of the Image) of iron and clay, whereon it is now going to destruction & so that our times are indeed the last part of *the last times*, being the times of the last

See *Medes*
Apost. p 71.
72, 73.

Medes Apost.
p. 82.

part of this last kingdome ; And hence reason if all the space of the *last times* to be reckoned short , as such a little time as you have heard, how short, how little, must this latter part of *these last times* be wherein our selves live ; yea , how little a pittance of time must that needs be, that is yet remayning , when so many hundred yeares of this last division , have passed over our heads already ; and here also consider what cause we have above all others, that lived in any of the times past , to attend to these exhortations that are given to us in the Scripture , from this consideration of *the last times*. Of which these following are some.

Hence are wee exhorted in Scripture , *not to set our affections on the things below, on the world, and on the things thereof*; should we look on this of the Apostle, it is the last houre or time, as chiefly intended for instruction to the *Jews*, and as a warning to them, of the end of their City *Jerusalem*, and Common-wealth now approaching, might it not also serve as a good *Item* unto them , that their hearts be not set on the glory of them. Of the people of the *Jews* some were abiding as yet in their own Land the time of their great captivity among all Nations spoken of by our Saviour , (*Luke* 21. 24.) being not yet come (though that might be the last houre unto it) yet many of them were already dispersed, witnesse *Peter* and *James*, directing their Epistles to them in dispersion in severall Countries , *1 Pet.* 1. 1. *James* 1. 1. The testimony of *Luke* also, *Acts* 2. Saying, that there were at *Jerusalem* , at that time of the Feast of Pentecost, *Jews, devout men, of every Nation under heaven* ; and we cannot conceive, but that there might all behold with a kinde of hope and expectation, the one of continuing in, the other of returning unto , this their Land and City , with the glory and beauty whereof they were so much taken , but being now warned by this intimation, (it is the last houre) that the end of their Common-wealth, and this their City is approaching, *wherein there shall not be one stone left upon another unto it*, which shall not be destroyed, how must they needs see all these their hopes and expectations to be off ; and from consideration hereof, that they cannot here finde a continuing City (no not in *Jerusalem* its self) nor any kingdome of the World, which (shall not be shaken, when *Canaan* their possession is thus taken from them) have their hearts set upon the new *Jerusalem*, that City to come, the builder and maker of which is God, as *Paul* exhorts, *Heb.* 13. 14. and like their fathers in the faith,

now look for an heavenly country, Heb. 11. 16. A kingdom that cannot be shaken, Heb. 12. 28. and an inheritance more excellent than that in Canaan, even that which Peter (their Apostle) mindes them of, an inheritance immortall, undefiled, that fades not away, reserved in heaven for them, to a living hope whereof they had been begotten in the resurrection of Christ, 1 Pet. 1. 13. Thus, I say, this use are they hereby warned to make of this calamity coming upon them, to walke closely with Christ, and in the ordinances of the Gospel (the Temple with all the services of worship wont to be performed in it, long now to be removed) and to let their faces heavenwards, enquiring the way towards that heavenly *Sion*, not hankering in their mindes after this their earthly inheritance, unto which after this generall disperſion, now coming on them, they were not again any more to return, and this use doth our Saviour exhort them to make of his approaching deſolation, *Luke 17. 31. He that is on the house top, and his stuffe in the house, let him not come down to take it away, and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back,* That is, not set his heart on these things, not to provide for them more then his own safety, like many persons that I have heard of, who lose their lives in their houses when they are on fire, for their goods sake, which they seek to save out of them. But to return, *Lots wife*, who (contrary to the command of God) looking back upon *Sodom*, (when flaming with the fire and brimstone, rained from God out of heaven upon it) in remembrance of the pleasures and delights enjoyed by her, in that too pleasant and fruitful place, was turned into a Pillar of Salt: and as the Covenant of Salt in Scripture, notes a lasting Covenant, so is shee indeed *צֶלֶק מַלַח* a sad, yet a lasting monument, of the wooll displeaseure of Almighty God, against those that shall fix their minds on the world when he calls to them to leave it, and is here set to this end, to warne these in this their condition.

And hath *Jerusalem* its last houre, and is this the use they were to make of it? what then can we judge otherwise of any the Cities or places of our habitations, but that even in this world they may have their last houres also assigned unto them: Cities and Kingdoms have their periods, their spaces of time allowed, both for their rising and falling, as well as particular persons, what is become of the many famous Cities, renowned in Scriptures and ancient Histories, yea, of the flourishing Commonwealths, nay, the great

Monarchies mentioned in *Daniel*, that so for many ages successive-ly ruled the Nations, have not all of these had their last houres? have they not fallen with time, by it also so worne out, that scarce the remembrance of them is kept amongst us, that ever there were such in the world: And why then doe we also boast in these things? in our fine houses, our stately pallaces, pleasant gardens, wealthy possessions; fools that we are, can we think these our houses shall continue ever, even to every generation, surely if God hath not spared *Jerusalem*, the place of his presence, the praise and joy of the whole earth, but hath done this to them the green tree, what may he not doe to us dry trees, may not we also have in our selves expectation of a last houre appointed to these our places, whereby to withdraw our hearts from too much doating upon them?

But why stay I upon particular places, seeing the last houre or time in the Text, is, as you have heard, so to the world, and notes that the continuance of that is measured by time, that it shall not be everlasting without end, as it was not eternall without beginning, but as it had a beginning, so it shall have an end; God who hath set a bound of sand to the raging sea, to which he sayth, *Hither shall thy proud waters passe and no farther*, hath also set a limit or bound of time to the whole world, unto which it shall reach and continue, and no longer, there is then an end appointed unto it, wherein as it is, *ver. 17. The world shall passe away with the lust therein*, a time in the end of time, wherein Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to judge and render to every one according to his works. Wherein the Lord shall utter his great and terrible voyce, that voyce of his which once shooke the earth, but shall now not shake the earth onely, but also the heavens, and that with such a shaking which shall be the removing of the things that are shaken. *Heb. 12. ult.* wherein the one of these, *the heavens*, shall melt with fervent heat, shall be rolled together like the scrole of a booke; and passe away with a sound: And the other of these, *the earth*, with the works thereof to be burnt up, *2 Pet. 3. 10.* shall be utterly broken down, clean dissolved, exceedingly moved, reele to and firo like a drunkard, and be removed like a cottage and the transgression thereof be so heavie that it shall fall and not rise again, *Isai. 24. 19.* and be so removed from the face of him (Christ) who sitteth upon the white throne in that his appearance, that the place of it shall not be found, *Revel. 20. 11.* This even the Heathen Poet had so much light as to know,

What duties are to be minded in the last times.

21

Ovid 1. Met.

Esse-----afforetempus,

*Quo mare quo tellus, correptaque regia cæli
Ardeat, & mundi moles operosa laborei.*

And seeing these things shall be thus removed and dissolved, may not this consideration serve well to perswade men in any time of the world, in the words of the Apostle, in the former verses, *not to love the world nor the things of the world, seeing the world with the lusts thereof, thus passeth away*: who is it considering with himselfe to have an everlasting immortall soule, will set his heart upon, and place his happinesse in these transitory dead things, that are not of an everlasting continuance.

But may it perswade men of all times, and not much more then these of the last times, us upon whom the ends of the world are come, that live in these last times, which are now running and hastening apace towards this the finall period of it, especially seeing these times are but short, and we in the last part of them, wherein we may see grey haire the messengers of approaching death, to be dispersed here and there upon the world, witnessing it to be in its old and declining age, not far from the gates of death; in these signes of the end of the world, which we may see fulfilled; from which we may certainly conclude, that the world cannot be long liv'd, but that this dissolution of it is now very neere, even at the doors, though how little time it be, God knows, in whose power the times and seasons are reserved.

And now beloved, shall we who live in these short last times, and latter part of them, and know not how soon we may see these things accomplished, shall we, I say, set our hearts on these things, be still loading our selves with this thick clay, still following these vanities, these broken Cisterns, setting our hearts on riches, if it increase a little upon us, putting our trust in this uncertainty of riches, laying out all our labour on these things which are not bread, and our money in this which profits not, while we neglect better things, even that care and endeavour we should have for our in mortall souls, and our everlasting condition, which these things of themselves can never be able to advantage or conduce unto; may we not be reprov'd that will set our mindes on this house of the world, that we may be daily expecting (so old and rotten it is) when it will fall about our ears, upon these our habitations here, which we know

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not how soon we may see flaming by the fire of the great day. O brethren thinke on these things, consider this short sentence, It is the last houre, it is the last time, and let it cause you out of hand, as Citizens of the new *Ierusalem* to set your affections on things above, to labour for the meat that perisheth not, to seeke first the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof, and trust God, according to his promise, for the supply of other things you stand in need, it is high time for you to set about this, it is the last houre, and so looke on it, that you defer not this work till it be too late: how sad a thing will it be in that day, for a man to see all his riches and happiness in an instant burnt up and consumed: O then be sure betime to seeke after true riches, to be rich, through faith, in the Son of God, and to make him your treasure, who is in heaven at the right hand of God: here is durable riches, a sure habitation, a Kingdom that cannot be shaken and removed, as all the habitations and Kingdoms of this world shall be. The riches here laid up is such that moth and rust cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal, neither shall the fire of the great day be able once to reach or come neere this, by which all these things shall be thus destroyed and consumed. This exhortation the Scripture gives upon this ground, *1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. But this I say brethren, the time is short,* (There you have one doctrine) and this use of exhortation follows, *It remaineth that both they have wives, be as though they had none, and they that weepe, as though they wept not, &c. and they that use the world as not abusing it,* and hath this reason moreover to presse it, which I have all along urged, *for the fashion of this world passeth away.* And thus you have the first exhortation, arising from this consideration of the last times.

2

By this imitation, it is the last houre, may wee be exhorted and warned, not to be offended with, but rather to provide for these sufferings and evils, that may befall us *in these last times*; for the last times are noted in Scripture for times of great afflictions and trials: so was the last time of *Ierusalem* to be to the *Jews*, *Luke 21. 23.* A time of great distresse in the land, and wrath upon the people, which if we look on this intimation, as concerning them, they are warned to provide for, and not to be offended with; not to think it strange of the fiery tryall; for so *Peter* warning them also of this, calls these *the sufferings now coming on them.* And thus might it be such a warning to the people of God in all the times of these

the last times, all which are noted unto them to be times of great affliction, and they still warned to provide for them. *The way that leadeth unto life is a strait way*, always hath been and always will be *τεθλιμῖν* afflicted, and therefore few there are that will enter in thereat; Christ hath taught us the way by the Crosse to the Crown, and assures us, that he cannot be his Disciple, *that will not take up his crosse and follow him*; that is, not willing to drink of the cup hee drank of, and be baptized with the Baptisme hee was baptized with. Hee that will not suffer with him; must not expect to reigne with him; This is the cost we must account when wee first take on us the profession of the name of Christ, to be made like our Master conformable to him in sufferings, hated in the World as hee was, and called to forsake father and mother, wife and children, lands and houses, yea our lives also for his sake and the Gospell, and through these many tribulations to enter into the Kingdome of God. All that would live godly in Christ Jesus, must in all the times of the World, ever since the enmity first set between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the Serpent, (wicked men) expect to suffer persecution for the world (which lyeth in the wicked one) will still hate those that are not of the world, that are of God; and chosen out of the world, and offer all the violence it can unto them; the world can love and gently intreat none, but its owne. But must this inore especially be expected in the last times, wherein Christ having, by his death broken the Serpents head, shall come by his Gospel in all Nations to erect and setup his kingdome; then shall the rage of the Devil and wicked men, be greater then formerly against the Church and people of God, which the consideration of the last times, should warne those that live in them to look for, what they are to expect in them; Christ tels, when he sayth; *he came not to send peace, but (by accident) a sword*, meaning the afflictions and persecutions that would arise for the Gospel, for which so great should be the division, *that a man should be divided against his father, daughter against mother, and mother in law, against daughter in law. Hee came, hee saith, to kindle a fire on the earth, what will I, saith he, if it be already kindled.* And this wee see by the History of the Acts of the Apostles, in the great sufferings that came on the Disciples and Christians for the cause of Christ to be fulfilled; and this is to be expected by the people of God in all the last times even unto Christs second coming: though God may give them now and then a day or year of refreshing and com-

Mat. 7. 14.

Mat. 10. 38.

Mat. 16. 24.

Mat. 20. 21, 22.

Rom. 8. 17.

Luke 14. 28.

Mat. 10. 24, 25.

John 15. 20.

Luke 14. 16.

Acts 14. 21.

2 Tim. 3. 12.

1 John 5. 19.

1 John 3. 1.

John 15. 18, 19

Mat. 10. 34.

Luke 12. 49.

1 Kings 20.22

Revel. 12.12.

Dan. 7.21, 25.

Revel. 17.6.

Revel. 16.14
16.Revel. 19.19, 20.
2.

2 Tim. 3.1.

comfort, yet ought they like good souldiers never to put off their armour but hourly to expect the renewing of the War, and the revolution of their former condition of persecution upon them; God even still saith to them, as sometimes to *Ahab King of Israel, concerning the Syrians*, 1 Kings 20.22. *Go, strengthen your selves and mark and see what you do, for at the return of the year*, the Prince of this World, the King of the children of pride, with his band's of wicked men, *will again come upon you*. But as this is to be expected more in the last times, then in any times before, so most especially, most of all, in the latter part of the last times, in these last times wherein we live; when *the Devils time is but short, is his rage greatest against the Church of God*, Revel. 12.12. this war, the neerer it draws to an end, the more violent shall it grow; the feet, the latter part of the Image shall act more cruelly against Gods people then ever did the former. See but the pranks plaid by the Popedome, the little horn, when he comes to act his part in the latter part of that Kingdome, and of the last times, Dan. 7.21. *Hee makes war with the Saints, and prevails against them, and continues to wear out the Saints of the most high, v. 25. The whore in her time is to make her self drunk with the blood of the Saints and Martyrs of Iesum*, Revel. 17.6. and by unclean spirits like Frogs, (their Jesuits may be well likened to them) endeavour to perswade, and shall perswade and gather together, the Kings of the earth, to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, against *Armageddon* the Church of Christ; that *הר ציון*, the mountain of his pleasant fruits, and perswade them to destroy the people of God, as a people not worthy to live, who would set up another Kingdome, that of Jesus Christs which their Kingdomes cannot beare withall; and in the end of time, shall the Roman beast and false prophet be assisted with an Army of Kings of the earth to fight against the people of God, with the Lord Jesus Christ their Captain appearing for them; in which war beastly false prophets and Kings are all destroyed together. See that as *Paul* saith, *the last times shall be perillous times*, and the neerer we draw to the end of them, the more perillous shall they grow; to heare of *Massacres in France*, of inhumane unheard of barbarous cruelties, acted by the rebels in *Ireland*: the persecutions in this Kingdome in our *Marian* days, and the cruelties of the Popish party in the late war; let us not wonder at all, consider it is the last times, and wee are in the last part of them, these things must

must be, and let us look for the like, and if possible greater cruelties then our brethren have suffered, as wee live neerer the end then they, and the rage of the Devill and Pope greater now then ever: how soon the Lord may exercise us in this kind we know not, but let us never expect a long time of Quiennesse, so long as the man of sin is in the World, I wonder how in these times men can be talking of a golden age, of an earthly kingdom approaching, the thoughts whereof did stagger the Disciples at the suffering of Christ, and I feare may, too many amongst us, when suffering times shall come upon them, which I pray God, our own divisions at this time amongst us, may not be a mean to hasten. Therefore if wee see such things as these be not offended; these things must be, consider that we are in the last times, and these things are sufficient signes of them: nothing men are so apt to be offended withall as sufferings: affliction and persecution for the word soon offended him who was but a temporary in his faith, and had not root in him,

Mat. II. 21.

Read and consider:

Mat. 24.

Mark 13.

Luke 17. &

21 Chap.

Mat. 13. 21.

Mat. 24. 10.

John 16.1.

Acts 14.22.

And so are many offended by these the great calamities and sufferings of the last times, *Mat. 24. 10.* But Christ, that his Disciples may not be afraid, tells them and warns them of these things, that they may provide and looke for them. *These things I have spoken unto you, that you may not be offended, they shall put you out of their Synagogues.* yea, the *wee*. houre or time cometh (this last houre in the Text) wherein he that kills you shall thinke he doth good service to God, *Behold, sayth he, I have foretold you, John. 16. 1, 2.* and *Paul* strengthened the hearts of the Disciples, when he exhorted them to abide in the faith, and told them, that through many tribulations they must enter into the Kingdom of God, *Act. 14. 22.* Thus that the little children here in the Text may not be offended, but provide for these things, is this intimation in the Text, *It is the last time*, that hence they and all of us may learn, and be exhorted (wee especially that have falne into the last and most troublesome part of them, to looke for those things which the Scripture tells us shall be the condition of the last times, and gives us this *Item*, that we may provide for them accordingly : And thus much also for the second exhortation arising out of these words.

From this intimation of the last times, may we also be warned and exhorted, to looke for, and not to be offended, with the many Antichrists, that is, false Apostles, false teachers, deceivers that shall

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come in the last times, and the great multitudes that shall be deceived to follow after them. The speaking of this cannot be avoided, being so expressly mentioned in the Text, *There are now many Antichrists*, whereby we know that it is the last time, this we are forewarned of to be the condition of the last times, but especially of the latter part of the last times wherein we live. In the last times the Devill comes not onely by force and cruelty to oppose the Kingdom of Christ, as you heard in the former particular, but by guile and policie also, as you shall heare in this. The Devill knowing the last times to be designed for the comming of Christ, and the works that were to be done by him, that the Jews might not acknowledge him, when he came amongst them, raiseth up in the last times, (but never as we read of before) divers amongst the Jews to deceive them, as if they were the Christs, the Messiahs, and thereby be deceived, and made mistake the true Messiah when he came amongst them. Thus were there many such among the Jews; such as these two notable deceivers mentioned by Gamaliel, in his speech *Act. 5. 36. Theudas and Judas*, both of them in the last times, and this latter in the dayes of the taxing, *Luke 2. 1.* when the Messiahs comming was much expected among the Jews, and at which time Jesus Christ the true Messiah was borne, And as Histories report, not long after the destruction of Jerusalem, in the dayes of *Adrian* the Emperour, a great Imposter arose amongst them, pretending himselfe the true Messiah, and who applying to himselfe the Prophecy of *Balaam, Numb. 24. 17, 18. There shall come a Star out of Jacob*, was called *Ben-Cockab*, that is, the sonne of the star, and was by them mightily followed after, as if he had been their Messiah indeed, many thousands flocking after him, who at length, after three years and an halt siege in a Citie, which he had possessed was overcome and destroyed with those that were with him, by the Roman Forces, and ever since is remembered by them for this his deceit, by the name of *Bar-Cozab*, that is, the sonne of a lie, or a Lier, and many such did arise among them, who said, I am Christ. And thus might this be a warning to the Jews to take heed of such. Thus also was it to be among Christians, among them also in the last times were many Antichrists, Seducers and false teachers to arise, Our Saviour tells us, *Luke 21. 8.* that the time was at hand, it would not be long ere these Deceivers should shew themselves; many false christs, that had a different unction from Christ

Sunt. Syn. Iud.

pag 514. 515.

*Post eum tamen
aliud hoc mul-
ti, pro Messia
se venditarunt;
prout in lib. o
Schekler Iebu-
dah: legere est.*

Christ or his Apostles, and did teach Doctrine contrary unto them, which the historie of the Acts of the Apostles shews to have been verified, so also doe these Apostles, 2 *Epist. John*, vers. 7. many Antichrists and deceivers were come into the world and *Jude*, that already certain men had crept in unawares, who divide the Lord that bought them: such as *Cerintius*, *Marcion*, *Ebion*, *Valentinus*, *Arim*. &c. that shewed themselves in the first times, presently after Christ, and in short time after, consult we with Ecclesiasticall Histories, we shall finde no age of the Church to be free of such, yet are even these also to swarme in their greatest abundance, in the latter part of the last times, in the times wherein we live, since the discovery of Antichrist the great deceiver and false Prophet. That of these we have cause of all other to be warned, and if we see it so not to be offended, but look on it as a signe of the latter times wherein we have fallen, so *Paul* shews, 1 *Tim.* 4. 1. in the latter times that there should be such as should teach the Doctrine of Devils, so *Jude* also as well, as that such men as you have heard were crept in in his time, so *ver.* 18. That such should especially be in the last times, who are there described in the following verses. And consult with our Saviour concerning the signes of the neere approaching end of the world, we shall see this to be the principall, the increase of false teachers and deceivers that should be in them, so that this is not to seeme strange, if we see it so come to passe, as indeed by too sad experience we doe see it among our selves at this present, but we ought rather to looke for such, and expect it should be so, and be armed against them. And now why is this intimation also given, but that we should not be offended at the rising and coming of such. Persons are apt to be offended, especially weake Christians, the little children of the Text, they are apt to be troubled, yea shaken and staggered in their mindes by reason of such, for doe not we see by experience, how people reason from these present differences amongst us, they wonder to see so many Religions amongst us, (as they say) never more hideous, monstrous opinions in the world then are now, and all seeme to pretend to the Scripture for what they say, so doe the Arminians, the Serinians, Familists, Anabaptists, Antinomians, Seekers, all these names of severall sorts, of severall Religions, as they say amongst us, with many more such like, now, say they, where shall a poore soule pitch in this diversity? which side shall we take unto, that

Mat. 24.
Mark 13.

*Eodem modo
hodie quoque
erigi debet, &c.
dum omnia mis-
cet Satan, tur-
baude Ecclesie
causa: hec enim
sunt ultimi tem-
poris signa, Cal.
in hoc locum.*

are not able to try things by the Scripture, as we are exhorted, and thus many are offended, especially weake Christians, and therefore for the establishing of such, how necessary is such an intimation as Christ gives concerning them, *Mat. 24. 15. Behold, I have foretold you: I have acquainted you of the coming of these before hand, that you be not offended when they doe come, but rather expect their coming in the last times;* and thus should we from this consideration, that it is the last houre, that the ends of the world are come on us, expect such in this time more then in other times, and be settled in the faith, so that we be not shaken from it by them. Let us not wonder at all that such abound now more then in former times, but consider, it is the latter part of the last times, wherein we can expect no other but that it should be so: while Satan labours thus to bring all things to a confusion amongst us, let us be comforted in this, that they are signes, sure signes, of the last times come upon us, more of this you shall heare in the following Sermon, upon the second part of this Text, but thus much for this their exhortation, from this intimation in the Text, *It is the last time.*

The fourth exhortation that may arise from this consideration of the last times, is, That by it we be stirred up to an earnest expectation, and looking for the second coming and appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have heard all the times of the world to his first coming to have been called the first times, in all which what had the people of God in their severall times, such an eye unto, such an expectation of, as the fulfilling of the great promise of the coming of the Messiah among them, to which their first times did lead them, and with which they should be ended: so what shall now be expected by us in the last times, but the great promise of his coming again to be fulfilled, to which these our last times lead us, and with which they also shall be ended, That as in his first coming he was the hope of *Israel*, he may be the expectation of Jews and Gentiles in this of his second. This is in all the times of the last times, to be the constant expectation of the people of God, to expect the coming from heaven, of their Lord and Saviour Iesus Christ, *Phil. 2. 20.* from whence they are described in Scripture to be such as looke for his coming, *Heb. 9. ult.* and such as love his appearance, *2 Tim. 4. 8.* To whom onely (as you perceive in these places) shall he appeare for salvation, and is the Crown of Glory laid up, for upon this promise, shortly to be

ac-

*Phil. 2. 20.
Heb. 9. ult.
2 Tim. 4. 8.*

accomplished in the faith of every just person fixed, *Heb. 10. 37, 38.* and this in the exercise of faith doe they patiently wait for, *1 Theſ. 1. ult.* and in an expectation of it are they exercised in a continuall practice of godlinesse, *Titus 2. 11, 12, 13.* which exerdation of theirs by the command of Christ, by the full accomplishing of all the promises, destruction of all their enemies. (even of death the last of all) redemption of their bodies, and perfection of the body of Christ, of all the elect of God together in soule and body in all happiness then to be fulfilled, are they raised unto. And this is to be the expectation of all the people of God in all these times of the last times, with this intimation in the Text, it is the last times calls them unto, for what remains else to be expected? doe not all our dispensations lead us to this: the Sacraments serve (as you have heard) to shew forth his death till he come. See how his first and second coming are joynd together, that after the first, the second may be still expected, *Heb. 9. 28.* *Christ was once offered to take away the sins of many;* The second time he shall appeare without sin, as who would say, nothing is now to be expected but this his second coming, no more speaking. For *God hath spoken fully and perfectly to us in these last dayes by his Son, Heb. 1. 1.* no more sacrificing for sin for all these are put an end unto, by that one sacrifice of himselfe offered by him for sin in the end of the world, *Heb. 9. 26.* so that this, this of his coming again, is the main thing now to be expected.

* This doe divers look upon as the mayn thing intended in the Text, that the Apostle to this end calls *these times the last times*, because all things are so fulfilled in them, as that nothing remainys, but that we expect this last revelation of Christ. And is this to be the expectation of all the people of God in all these last times? much more then ought it to be of us, in this latter part of them, so now drawing neer to the end of them, and to this his coming, the neerer it approacheth, the more earnestly is it to be expected and provided for; the whole time is but short, yet they that were in the first part, might seem to have something elsse to expect; namely, the Apostasie from the faith and coming of the man of sin, by whose coming of the *last times* were to be divided, and Christs coming not to be till the latter part of them. And therefore though they knew the whole of the *last times* were to be judged short, and that Christs coming was even by them, (though they lived in the beginning of them) still to be expected; yet if exhorted thereunto, might

Heb. 10. 37, 38.
1 Theſ. 1. last
Titus 2. 11, 12,
13.

Esſigitur quod
in momenta red-
ditum Domini
expectamus à
cælo.
Par. on Heb. 9.
26.

Heb. 9. 28.

Heb. 1. 1.

Heb. 9. 26.

* *Apostolus vul-*
gari Scripturæ
more denunciat
fidelibus nihil
jam amplius re-
ſtare, niſi ut
Chriſtus, in
munda. r. dem-
ptionem appa-
reat; & agniti-
onem. Tenendum eſt
Apoſtoli conſi-
lium, quod uti-
limo tempus
vocet, in quo ſe
complementer o-
mnia, ut nihil
ſuperſit præter
ultimam Chriſti
revelationem.
Calvin. in hunc
locum.

might not they have a fair pretence, thus to reason; why tell you us it is *the last times*, and presse us thence, to look still for the coming of Christ: These are *the last times* indeed, yet Christs coming shall not be in our times, who live in the first part of them; wee see not Antichrist yet revealed, nor the Apostasie from the faith, which we have learned shall be; Christs coming must be in the latter part of *the last times*, after the revelation of Antichrist, and by them that live then to be expected, and not by us who live in the first part of them. Thus might they seeme to have some pretence for it, should they have reasoned after this manner, who yet as you perceive were, were still called on by the Apostles, to set this before them continually; but what have we to pretend why we should so reason, and not rather be more earnestly then ever called on to set this before us; for there is good reason for it, we living in this latter part of *these last times*, which they did not: we seeing the revelation of the man of sin, and that there hath been such an Apostasie, which they did not: we now see the persecutions and wars raised by the little horn against the people of God in all places, and have felt enough to make us sensible thereof; we see the abundance of heresies, and the great increase of false christs, false teachers, and deceivers amongst us at this time, and these (as you have heard in the former particulars.) the proper signes of these latter days, and evident, and the most immediate foregoing signes of Christs coming in the end of time what can we conclude hence but that, surely now the time is short, now he will come quickly, it cannot be long thither in our time; the whitenesse of the fields shews the harvest to be at hand, and the blossoming of the fig-tree that the Summer is neere, so doe these things shew this *coming of Christ to be neere even at the doores*; *Mat. 24. 31. 34.* and now are to lift up our heads, expecting that the day of our redemption now drawing nigh and approaching will indeed be revealed, *Luke 21. 28.* Now to heare Christ speaking to us, *Behold, I come quickly*, to which let our hearts in earnest expectation thereof, eccho back and say, *yea, come Lord Jesus, come quickly: Revel. 22.*

Mat. 24. 32, 34.

Luke 21. 28.

Revel. 22.

And here let mee exhort you, that you be not by any means whatsoever taken off from this expectation, which you are now exhorted unto; If you look into the state of the World, you shall see it very secure, nothing thinking or dreaming of such a thing as this; few entertain discourse of it; go to the Papists, they put off all looking

ing for this, expecting an Antichrist yet to be revealed, when yet themselves are bond-slaves to him; Amongst our selves too many put it off to a long day, expecting the *Jews* returne to their owne Land, and I know not what 1000 years of a temporall Kingdom yet to come, which causeth this thought of the comming of Christ to be removed from them, and to what other end serves these opinions, but unto this: surely wise virgins and foolish, now seeme to be all asleepe, and both to say the Bridegroom delays his comming and shoulde Christ now come, he would finde on the earth, very little faith and expectation of his comming, and yet even this security of the world shews it to be the neerer approaching: for in such a posture shall Christ finde and surprize the world at his comming, let us not then by any such means have our hearts withdrawn from this, but shew ourselves to be good servants of the Lord Jesus Christ by such an earnest expectation of the return of our Master.

Yet doth this intimation in the Text, It is the last time, and all these severall exhortations you have already heard to arise out of it, serve but unto this fifth and last particular, which is to exhort us to shake off security, and to exercise all diligence in the practice of those Christian duties which from these considerations we are exhorted unto in Scripture.

In generall, from these considerations of the last times, of the troublefomnesse of them, the increase of false teachers; and the neerer approaching of Christs comming are restitured up to watchfulness, *Mat. 24. 42. 43.* like the good man of the house, that knows not what houre the thiefe will come, and therefore still watcheth, like the good servant that hath his lamp still burning, and his loyns always girt, expecting the return of his Master, *Luke 12. 35, 36.* and Christ sayth, *what I say to you* (meaning his Disciples) *I say to all watch, Mar. 13:* which the shortnesse of the time, and the so-dainnesse of his comming, which shall be as a thiefe in the night, the uncertainty of the particular time of it to us, we know not what houre it shall be, the reward of the watchfull, and punishment of the unprepared are made arguments to presse us unto, that so we be not surprized by it, and so to daie destruction come, not unawares upon us.

Mat. 24. 42, 43.

Luke 12. 35, 36.

Mark 13. ult.

In the exercise of which duty of watchfulness, we are

To take heed and beware of the sins of the last times, for in them shall iniquity abound. See how the men of the last times are de-

2 Tim. 3. 2.

described, 2 Tim. 3. 2. to be selfe-lovers, covetous, boasters, proud, unbelly &c. to have indeed a forme of godlinesse, but denying the power thereof, but Christ tells us more particularly what shall be the sins of the last times, and in what a condition he shall finde the world at his coming, That it shall be as in the dayes of Noah, wherein they

Mat. 24. 8. 39.

were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, Mat. 24. 28, 29. all which did argue the security of that people, that they believed not Noah's preaching, concerning the judgement of God coming on them, and therefore were swept away by it: These things are lawfull, eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, they are the Ordinances of God for preservation of life, of mankind and of humane society, and therefore the use of these things when lawfully used, cannot be forbidden; but as it is brought to note their security, so their abuse in these is forgiven, for this place answers that of our Saviour, Luke 21. 34. Their eating was to sur-

Lu. 21. 34.

fetting, their drinking to drunkenesse, their marrying and giving in marriage, altogether for worldly ends, and therefore are we warned to take heed of these, of surfetting drunkenesse, and the cares of this life, which shall be the sins of the last times, and how is our age over-whelmed in these sins? when did they abound as now? whereby we may see it is the last times. And whence comes it that men are so given to these sins, but because they put far from them this day, which shall be indeed an evill day to them, mens eating and drinking with the drunken, and to drunkenesse is because they say their Master delays his coming, and their walking thus according to their own lusts, is, because they say, Where is the promise of his coming? 2 Pet. 3. 4. This is the reason these sins thus abound amongst us, which wee have cause to be warned to take heed of, that our hearts be not overcome with them, and so be indisposed to spirituall watchfulnesse, and that day come on us as a snare, as unawares, let us not sleep as doe others, but let us that are of the light and day, watch and be sober.

2 Pet. 3. 4.

1 Thes. 5. 6.

2

Titus. 1. 2.

In this watchfulnesse are we called to a generall practice of holiness in all the parts and duties of it, continually and in the whole course of our conversation. Thus the Apostle Peter teacheth us to reason, 2 Pet. 3. That seeing wee look for such things, what manner of persons ought we to be in all manner of godlinesse in our conversation, and study to be found without spot and blemish before him, and in love, and in looking for this blessed hope and glorious appearance of the

the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, are wrought, by the grace of God, to deny all ungodlinesse and worldly lusts, and to live godly, righteously, and soberly in this evill world. Thus should we endeavour in all things to exercise a conscience voyd of offence, both towards God and towards men; this use should we make of these Considerations, herein exercising true Christian watchfulnesse, and blessed is that servant, whom when his master cometh, he shall finde so doing.

Luke 12. 35.

More especially let us respect these two things, viz. A continuall exercise of Faith and Prayer.

Of Faith, what is the property of one that watcheth but to keep his garments about him, to have his loyns girt, Revel. 16. 15. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, it was a watchword for us in these times, he that is found naked, it seems shall not have time then allowed to seeke garments and put them on, but shall have the shame of his nakednesse discovered to all persons, he shall walke naked and men see his shame. Righteousnesse in Scripture is compared to a garment, so is our own righteousness, yet to a ragged one never able to cover us in the nakednesse of our sins, yea, to filthy rags, and he that hath no other garment on him then this, no other righteousness then his own, shall be found, notwithstanding it, as naked as Adam was: but Christs righteousness is a long Garment, sufficient to cover the whole man, to cloath us, as we say, from top to toe, it is clean white linnen, able to make us acceptable, and present us without spot and blemish in the presence of God, let us put this garment on and gird it about us, which is no otherwise put on then by faith, whereby we receive Christ and remission of sins, Act. 26. 18. and are righteous by faith in his name. Let this then be the desire of your souls, as it was of Pauls, that in the day of Christ in his appearance, we may be found, not having on us our own righteousness, that of the Law, but that which is of faith in Jesus Christ, the righteousness of God through faith, Phil. 3. 9. Let us therefore that are of the day be sober, putting on us the breastplate of faith, 1 Thes. 5. 6.

Revel. 16. 15.

Of prayer likewise that is joyned with watchfulnesse, Mar. 13. 33. Watch and pray, Mar. 14. 38. Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation never such strong temptations as in the last times, then doth the Devill most of all labour to draw us from Christ,

2

what by the violence of wicked men: what by the deceits of false teachers? Let us therefore as we are taught by Christ, alwayes pray, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evill one;* alwayes pray that the Lord would keepe us from the strong deceits and temptations of the last times, that we may be strengthened to witnesse the truth against all opposition, and established in the knowledge of the truth, that we be not led aside from it, by the policie and subtilty of the multitude of false teachers, and still pray that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to passe, and be inabled in that day with boldnesse to

Luke 21. 36.

stand before the Son of man,

Luke 21. 36.

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THE SECOND SERMON.

I JOHN 2. 18.

Little children, it is the last time, and as you have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.

From the proposition of the Apostle in these words, *It is the last times*, I come to that which is brought for confirmation thereof in these that follow, *And as you have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.* Whereby it appears, that though these many exhortations might well be given from these words, *It is the last time*, which you heard in the former Sermon, yet that the principall intent of the Apostle herein is to *warn the little children* (to whom he writes) *to beware of Antichrist*, who should come, and of the many Antichrists that were already come, of whom the little children were in most danger of being led away and seduced by them.

Out of these words thus much hath been evinced already, *viz.* that in *the last times*, as well as the great Antichrist, so many Antichrists should arise, that of these latter there should be in all times, but especially in greatest abundance, after the revelation of Antichrist in the latter part of the *last times*, from which consideration our times were evinced to be the latter times, and our selves warned that we be not offended nor deceived by them. That then which

is the principall intent of the Holy Ghost in the Text, to discover false teachersto us, and to warne us all, especially the *little children*, to beware of them, I now come in these latter words more directly to speake unto.

You see that in these words the Apostle speaks of Antichrist, and of many Antichrists. Antichrist as of one, in the singular number, Antichrist as of many in the plurall. Of the Antichrists the Apostle sayth, *even now there are many*: but for the eminent person in wickednesse called, *ὁ Ἀντίχριστος*, the Antichrist, the Apostle sayth, *you have heard he shall come*, yet sayth not of him that he was come, but rather implies, that as yet he was not come into the world; For the Apostle *Paul* speaking of this Antichrist, whom he calls *the man of sin, the son of perdition*, tels us that in his time he was not come, but was to be revealed in his own time appointed thereunto, which was not till he that did let (the Roman Empire) should be taken out of the way, onely that that mystery of iniquity, so opposite to the mystery of godlinesse, was then in his time working; *2 Thes. 2. 6, 7, 8.* so the Apostle *John* here speaking of the same thing, sayth not of Antichrist that he was come, but there were many Antichrists, and in them was that mystery of iniquity (which *Paul* sayth wrought in his time) working, in these did the spirit of Antichrist begin to shew it selfe, and as the Lord sent many Prophets before hand to foretell and make way for the comming of Christ, that great prophet that should come, so hath Antichrist, that great false Prophet and deceiver, these many Antichrists and deceivers that were of the same spirit, to be his fore-runners, beginning betime, even in the time of the Apostles, to make way for his comming.

This word Antichrist, signifies one against, or contrary unto Christ, the Apostle *Paul* calls him *ἄντιχριστός*, one that opposeth and setteth himselfe against Jesus Christ, Christ is anointed, *anointed with the oyle of gladnesse above his fellows*, Heb. 1. 9. *anointed with the spirit of God*, Luke 4. 18. *anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power*, Act. 10. 38. which ointment of his (by him received) not in measure but in all fulnesse, *like the oymment poured on the head of Aaron, runs down upon the skirts of his garment*, so of the fulnesse that is in him doe all his members receive grace for grace, and are anointed with the same spirit, though not in that measure, and this spirit of theirs, whereby they are anointed is called the spirit of truth,

*2 Thess. 2. 6;
7, 8.*

ἄντιχριστός.

2 Thess. 2. 4.

Luke 4. 18.

Acts 10. 38.

John 3. 34.

John 1. 16.

John 15. 26.

John 16. 13.

truth, whereby Christ hath promised to guide and lead his, who are anointed with it, into the way of truth, the truth of the Gospel, but Antichrist, who is as appears by his name; so contrary, so opposite to Christ, hath another unction contrary to this of Christs, another contrary spirit wherewith he is anointed, a spirit, yet not of the truth, but of error and deceit; a spirit, yet not of God, but of the world; and so these severall unctions or spirits opposed each to other, 1 John 4. 3, 6. where the spirit of error is the spirit of Antichrist, and is contrary to the spirit of truth that is in Christ and his servants. And so this name Antichrist, though in a larger sence, it may be given to all the enemies and opposers of Christ, that even tyrants, that persecute the way of the Gospel may be so called, and I know nothing in the signification of the word itself that can hinder it, yet in the use of the word it is appropriated to these ψευδοχριστοι, these false Christs that our Saviour speaks of, that come in the name of Christ: Yet having in them the spirit, not of truth but of error, doe teach another Gospel, Doctrine contrary to that of Christ and his Apostles, in the principall doctrines of truth, so that as Christ, the ἰχθυσ, who was anointed with this fulnesse of the Spirit of truth, is called also the ὁ σφραγισμενος, the Prophet that should come into the world; so the ὁ ἀντιχριστος, his opposite, that hath in him (as I may say) the fulnesse of the evill spirit, is called also the ὁ ψευδοσφραγισμενος; the false Prophet that should come, Rev. 19. 20. Yet as the Prophets and Apostles of the Lord, that have the same unction of the Spirit of truth, though not in that measure, may be called πολλοι χριστοι, as they are, Psal. 105. 15. touch not mine anointed, my Messiaes, my Christs: So the 70 render that, ἡσυχασαι τῶν χριστῶν μὴ which is spoken of the Prophets, as the latter part of the verse explains it, doe my Prophets no harme, so the many false Prophets and teachers, in whom is the same spirit of error, though not in that measure as in the great false Prophet, are here in the text called, πολλοι ἀντιχριστοι, many Antichrists, they are the same with these, ψευδοδιδασκαλοι, those false teachers which Peter speaks of, 2 Pet. 2. 1. and so many Antichrists in the Text is expounded by this same Apostle to be πολλοι ψευδοσφραγισται, many false Prophets; 1 Joh. 4. 1. that which is here, even now are there many Antichrists, if there, here are many false Prophets in the world, which shews that many Antichrists, and many false Prophets or false teachers to be all one, and 2 Joh. 7.

πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας.

πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης.

Revel. 19. 20.

Psal. 105. 15.

he

he calls them *ῥῆγῖς καὶ ψευδοί*, *Many deceivers that had in them the spirit of error, and did not abide in the doctrine of Christ, but did teach contrary thereunto.*

Of the great Antichrist who was not then come, I shall not now speake, but of the many Antichrists that were then come, whom we have already found out to be many false teachers, many false prophets, and to be called Antichrists, for having in them the spirit of Antichrist, a spirit contrary to that of Christ and his Apostles; for teaching doctrine also contrary to that of Christ & his Apostles: And because also they were but so many fore-runners, that made way for the coming of the great Antichrist, and those in whom that mystery of iniquity did worke in the Apostles dayes, so that this name of the many Antichrists, is not to be given to those Christians that are weake in the faith, that holding to the head Christ, doe hold fast to the principles of sound Doctrine and true Religion, and fundamentall things of the Gospel, and yet through weaknesse in understanding, may erre from the truth in some other things: These are not to be reckoned in this number of the many Antichrists, but those that having this spirit of error in them, seeke to subvert the foundation of Religion, teaching such doctrines, as by the consequence of them deny Christ come in the flesh, and so overthrow the foundation of all Religion, as the Apostle sheweth, *ver. 23.* These then are to be reckoned the many Antichrists, and concerning these, I being now to speake, I have divers things to propose unto you, which are necessary to be observed.

1 Doct.

2 John 7.

1 John 4. 1, 3.

In that the Apostle saith, even now are there many Antichrists we may observe, *That even in the Apostles times there were many Antichrists, there were many false apostles, many false teachers, who taught doctrine contrary to that taught by the true Apostles of Christ,* it is not amisse for us to observe this concerning these times of the Apostles, that wee may not think it strange to see it so now in our own times. This Apostle tels us in his second Epistle, *verse 7.* that there were then many deceivers come into the World; who did not confesse Christ come in the flesh. So in this Epistle, Chap. 4. *ver. 1.* That many false prophets were then come into the World, and that in these the spirit of Antichrist opposing the true doctrine of Christ did shew it self, *verse 3.* that, that spirit was then in the World, so also the Apostle *Jude*, that in his time certain men *ἡγεμόνες ἦσαν*, had come in secretly, as wee say by the bye, as the manner of false teach-

teachers is, whose heresie was like unto those that *John* here speaks of, verse 22. that they denied the onely Lord God and our Lord *Jesus Christ*, which plainly shews, that there were in these times many Antichrists in whom the spirit of Antichrist did then shew it self: and if we desire a more particular historical knowledge hereof, we need not run to other Histories, the Scriptures being able sufficiently to furnish us therewithall. Consult the History of the *Acts of the Apostles*, or their Epistles, wee shall finde enough of this in *Acts 15*. We finde some to have crept into the Church at *Antioch*, who taught a necessity of *Circumcision*, and keeping the Law of *Moses*, unto salvation, verse 1. by which there arose no small controversy in that Church to the disturbance of the peace thereof, verse 2. and by which the souls of many in that Church were troubled and perplexed, verse 24. The same doth also the Apostle forewarn the Church of *Ephesus* of; *Acts 20. 30.* that even among themselves would men arise speaking perverse things (calling their heresies and false doctrines so) and should draw many of the Disciples after them, whereby they should make a rent in their Church by there separating from their society. And how few of the Churches shall we finde free of such, if wee consult with the Epistles of the Apostles: In the Church of *Corinth* were some that denied the resurrection, which once denied, Christs death is overthrowne, our faith is made to be vain, and we to be as yet in our sins, *1 Cor. 15. 12, 13, 14, 15.* among them also were such whom the Apostles calls false prophets, deceitfull workmen, who as *Satan* their father, that they might deceive the better, were transformed as if they were the Apostles of Christ, *2 Cor. 11. 13.* such also came among the Churches of *Galatia*, who seemed to bring in another Gospel preaching the Gospel of Christ, and troubling the minde of Christians, *1 Gal. 7.* Who taught righteousness by the law, whereby Christs death is made to be but vaine, *Gal. 2. ult.* And taught them a falling away from grace by teaching such a necessity as they did of works and circumcision; *Gal. 5. 4, 5.* Among the *Philippians* also were such, those of the *Concision*, whom for their evill practices, the Apostles calls Dogs, evill workers, &c. *Phil. 3. 2.* So doth the Apostle warn *Timothy* of such, who made shipwrack of the faith, and held blasphemous opinions, *1 Tim. 1. 19, 20.* of such who taught the Resurrection to be already past, whereby the faith of many was overthrowne, and whose doctrines, for the destroying nature of them are compared to a Gangrene, *2 Tim. 2.*

Acts 15. 1.

Acts 20. 30.

2 Cor. 11. 13, 15.

Gal. 1. 7.

Gal. 2. ult.

Gal. 5. 4, 5.

Phil. 3. 2.

1 Tim. 1. 19, 20.

Titus I. II.

17, 18. *Titus* also is informed of such, whose false doctrines did subvert whole houses, and whose mouthes ought therefore to be stopped. 1 *Tit.* 11, so the doctrines of the *Nicolaitans*, of *Balaam*, and of *Jezabel*, whereby people were taught to commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed to Idols, taught and professed in the Churches of *Ephesus*, of *Pergamus*, and of *Thyatira*, *Rev.* 2. 6, 14, 20. doe altogether cleere this, that even in the Apostles times, there were many false prophets, false teachers, who are here in the Text called the many Antichrists, many in whom the spirit of Antichrist did worke, and that as they had been warned by Christ of many false christis that should arise to the deceiving of many, so they lived to see the truth thereof in some measure, fulfilled upon them in their own times,

Use.

Of all which, let us make this application, that if it were thus in the Apostles times, it is not to be wondred at as a strange thing if we see it much more so in these times of ours, in this latter part of the 1st time, which for the coming and abounding of false teachers, are especially marked out in Scripture (as you have heard,) Here may we reason as *Moses* did with *Israel*, that if they rebelled while he was living amongst them, much more would they when he was departed and gone from them: see if while the Apostles were living, by whole ministry the Churches were first gathered and constituted, who were men infallibly inspired and ensured of the Doctrine taught by them, who were eye witnesses of the things they delivered, and were able by miracles to confirme their Doctrine, and to stop the mouthes of gain-sayers; if so soone after Christ, and in the time of these men, the Devill dares, and hath thus the impudencie to shew himselfe in these false teachers, to hinder the settling of the Churches, much more in our times, so remote from the time of Christ and his Apostles, and wherein the great Antichrist hath been revealed, wherein are none so able to convince gain-sayers as the Apostles were, and very few that with those abilities they have, will set themselves to contend for the faith, much more, I say, will the Devill in these times of ours, by the multitude of false teachers, endeavour to obstruct and hinder the reformation and peace of the Churches. Thus in the beginning of our blessed reformation, in the days of *Luther*, did the Devill thus labour to hinder that blessed worke. If therefore in these times of ours also, we heare of the increase of many Antichrists amongst us, many false teachers,

teachers, in whom the spirit of Antichrist works, opposing the true Doctrine of Christ, and of his Apostles, if we heare of such who question the authority of the Scripture, and make it to be of no more authority then humane writings are, who deny the immortality of the soule, the satisfaction of Gods Justice by Christ, and make all that he did to be onely for manifestation of Gods love, and for the cleering of our consciences that deny Christ to be the Son of God, and make him to be but a meere man, these and such like horrid blasphemies have too many for their patrons, in these times of ours, but remembring what hath been spoken before, that it was foretold us in Scripture, that such should be the condition of the last times, and that thus also it was (as you have heard) in the times of the Apostles, though we have cause this day to be * humbled before God, for the dishonour done to his name in these things, and that men to the hurt of their own souls, are not able to endure sound doctrine, but turn aside in such multitudes as they doe from the faith, and having itching eares according to their own lusts, doe heap up such teachers to themselves: Yet are we not to wonder at it, as if some strange thing had befallen us, when the Devill doth no more then what he hath done in former times by these, to hinder the setting and peace of the Churches.

* Note that this Sermon was preached on the day of the monethly Fast in January last 1646.

But with respect unto these, what is to be done by the Ministers and people of God, for which observe what follows.

It is the duty of Ministers of the Gospel, and of all the people of God to oppose false teachers, and earnestly to contend against them for the truth of the Gospel. This is the duty of all, but especially of the Ministers of the Gospel, to whom God hath in speciall manner committed the word of reconciliation, and made watchmen to his people to take care of his flock, and to preserve his vineyard, and that as well as from the ravening wolves, who will not spare the flock, so also from the little foxes, who by false doctrines and heresies, by their subtilty, seeke covertly to undermine and destroy the same. To stir us all up to this is the intent of the Apostle Jude, in his Epistle, exhorting us, *ver. 3.* to strive earnestly for the faith once given to the Saints, because there were such men crept in unawares, *that turned the grace of God into wantonnesse, and deny the onely Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ,* against these are we to strive, and for the faith to strive earnestly, as Souldiers or Wrestlers that will nor lose what they strive for, nor be overcome by

2 Doct.

Jude v. 3.

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those they strive against, faith is here put for the doctrine of faith delivered in the Gospel, which those who are false teachers, by teaching contrary doctrines, labour to rob us of, This hath been once given to the Saints, as a precious Jewell committed to the Saints, and which all are charged to see that they keepe, and suffer not shipwrack of it; a Jewell worth the contending for, and that to the losse of alls And the whole life of a Christian, being a spirituall warfare, every Christian as a good Souldier of Jesus Christ, ought for this most earnestly to contend against false teachers, who are enemies thereunto, and seeke to deprive our souls of the enjoyment of it. And to stir all Christians up unto this, seems to be the intent of the Apostle *John*, in this warning given concerning them in this place, yet is this the duty, especially of those who are Ministers of the Gospel, for this is the good warfare *Paul* stirs *Timothy* up unto, *1 Tim. 1. 18.* as appears by his mentioning of those deceivers that made shipwrack of the faith, against whom he chargeth him to hold fast the faith in the immediate following verses. This is also that good fight of faith, which *Paul* bid *Timothy* as a Minister of the Gospel to fight, *Chap. 6. 12.* as appears by the good confession *Paul* intimates to have been made by him before many witnesses, and the charge given him, *ver. 14.* to keepe the commandements (meaning the doctrine of the Gospel) without spot, unrebukeable, untill the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is also the good thing committed to him, which by such a striving and contending as this, he is commanded to keepe, *ver. 20.* according to that of the Apostle, *Phil. 1. 27, 28.* requiring all to stand fast in one spirit, striving or wrestling together for the faith of the Gospel, in nothing afraid of the enemies of it. To this also is *Titus* exhorted, *Tit. 1. 13.* to reprove them sharply that they may be found in the faith, and to stop the mouthes of those, by whose false doctrines whole houses were subverted. This *Paul* confirms by his own example, by the dispute he and *Barnabas* together had against the false teachers who came down to *Antioch*, *Acts 15. 2.* his dealing likewise with those who troubled the Churches of *Galatia*, to whom (as a valiant souldier resolved not to give a foot of ground) he gives not place, no not an houre, that the truth of the Gospel might remain with the *Galatians*, *2 Gal. 5.* This of his frequent mentioning them in his Epistles, as in this of the *Galatians*, calling them deceitfull workmen, and discovering their deceits in his second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, *Chap. 10.*

1 Tim. 1. 18.

1 Tim. 6. 12. 20

Phil. 1. 27, 28.

Eph. 6. 12.

Titus 1. 13. 14.

Acts 15. 2.

Gala 5.

Chap. 10. calling them dogs, in his Epistle to the Philipians, pointing them out by name, that all may be warned to beware of them, and oppose them as he doth *Himeneus*, *Alexander*, and *Philatus*, in his Epistle to *Timothy* together with the censures of the Churches, and the Angels, the Ministers of them, in the Revelation, for suffering such among them, as taught the heresie of the Nicolaitans, the doctrines of *Balaam*, and of *Jezabel*, we all shew this that it is the duty of all, especially of the Ministers of the Gospel, to oppose false teachers, that bring Doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and thus ought they to do, That so the truth of the doctrine of the doctrine of the Gospel, by God committed to his people, especially to the Ministers of the word, may be preserved in the purity of it. The greatest privilege of the Jews was, that to them the Oracles of God were committed, but to looke to it, was the especial charge of the Priests and Levites, whose lips should preserve knowledge, and at whose mouth the Law was to be sought, and their care was no lesse for the preservation of it, keeping it from being lost in the time of their captivity, from being destroyed in the persecution raised against him by Antichrist, and also from the policy and deceits of men, that the Scriptures might not be corrupted by them: Thus also hath God committed the precious doctrine of the Gospel to his people called therefore the faith once given to Saints, given to them ~~unapolluted~~ delivered or committed to them; and that but once delivered, when all the Apostles with one mouth fully and perfectly delivered to the Church of the Saints the same truth according to the Scriptures of the Prophets, for the obtaining of salvation through Jesus Christ, as an unchangeable rule to be kept by them, without alteration, by either addition or diminution to the coming of the Lord, thus was it given and to this end committed, that therefore this is made the Apostles argument here, why such a continuall warre should be maintained by them against the enemies hereof, that so the faith thus once committed to them may be preserved by them: But thus is it more especially committed to the Ministers of the Word, that they also should have the more especiall care to the preservation of it, God, sayth *Paul*, 2 Cor. 5. 19. hath committed to us the word of reconciliation, he hath committed it to them as well as for the teaching of others, so for the preservation of it in the purity of it, against those who are the opposers thereof, thus hath *Timothy* the word to this end committed to him,

1 Reas. 11.

2 Cor. 5. 19.

1 Tim. 1. 18.

2 Tim. 1. 14.

2 Gal. 5.

1 Pet. 1. 18.

1 Cor. 4. 15.

1 Pet. 2. 2.

1 Tim. 6. 20.

1 Tim. 1. 18. and this also is *Pauls* argument whereby he presseth him to that care and diligence, yea striving and contending for the preservation of it, 2 Tim. 2. 14. charging him to hold fast the pattern of sound words, which he had heard of him, *through faith and love which is in Jesus Christ, and to lo'd fast the good things committed to him.* This was *Pauls* end in his striving so with the false Teachers at *Galatia*, *That the truth of the Gospel might remain with them in the purity and simplicity of it*, Gal. 2. 5. This word of truth is the immortall seed of the new birth, whereby God doth beget his people again to himselfe, by which the Ministers of the Gospel doe also become spirituall fathers (as *Paul*) begetting men by the Gospel: this also is the seed, is also the food, the bread, wine and milke, whereby the new-born babes, yea and strong Christians also, are nourished, and therefore it is the policy of the Devill, by false teachers, what in him lies, to mix this seed whereby they are begotten, with the mixture of false doctrines and opinions, whereby it may abate of the efficacie thereof, and not be so effectuell unto regeneration, yea he labours to corrupt and poyson this food, that so the children may be poysoned and destroyed in eating thereof; hence the care of the Ministers of the Gospel is, as for themselves, being stewards in the family of God, to feed the children with *ἀσλαν γάλα*, the sincere milke of the Word of God, not to be *καπηλευοντες*, (as hucksters that mix their wine with water) such as shall corrupt or deceitfully handle the Word of God, but as in sincerity, so for this is their main quarrell with false teachers, that so they may preserve the Word in the purity of it, and may still walke with a right foot to the Gospel, therefore, and on this ground is *Timothy* so admonished to avoid the vain babblings of corrupt men, and opposition of science, falsely so called, the vain ranglings and disputes of Sophisters, whose brawling contentions are not worthy the name of Philosophy or Science, that so hee might (as we all ought to endeavour to doe) *keepe that that was committed to him*, 1 Tim. 6. 20. surely God will require it at the hands of all, to keepe that which he hath committed to their trust with charge to see to the keeping of it. And this will God call all to account for, who have ever received his word, and had it thus committed to them. And happy shall be the condition of he or they, when God shall call them to account (when as *Paul*, they shall have finished their course) can say as he, that they *have fought a good fight*,

fight, against the enemies of the truth, and that they have kept the faith, that was committed unto them: for them, as for him, is laid up a Crown of righteousness, which the Lord, as a righteous Judge in that day shall give to them, and to all those who love his appearance 2 Tim. 4. 7. 8.

This also ought they to do in respect of the Church of God, and the souls of the people of God; the good of these ought all in their severall places, but especially the Ministers of the Word, to endeavour to preserve and promote; there being spirituall watchmen, that watch over and are to give account for the souls of people, Heb. 13. 17. they are spirituall husbandmen to whom the Lord hath committed the care of dressing and preserving his Vineyard; and are spirituall, Stewards in his family or house the Church, to give to all the children in it, their food in due season; how ought all to endeavour the good of these, to pray for and endeavour the peace of Jerusalem, the Church, and to watch over the souls of one another; but the Ministers of the word especially, to whom by reason of their office this charge is especially committed: and as they or any others will discharge this their duty; so ought they to contend for the truth, and to oppose false teachers, then whom, none do greater hurt and evill to the Church of God, and souls of Gods people: This is the principall means whereby the Devill seeks to destroy the Church of God; whereby Tyrants and their open force and cruelty hee cannot prevail against it: The many heresies spread abroad by those (who are Factours of the evill to that end) is that floud whereby the Dragon thought to have carried away the woman (the Church) after she had escaped the cruelty of the ten Persecutions, Revel. 12. 15. these by their false doctrines distract, unsettle and trouble the Churches, so they did the Churches of Galatia, Saint Paul wisheth them to cut off that did trouble them, and to beare their condemnation: They trouble you, sayth the Apostle, would pervert the Gospel of Christ, Gal. 1. 7. So were the souls of the people of God in Antioch troubled by the words of false teachers that came among them, yea, their souls were unsettled by them; the work of those was to take them off from all their grounds of comfort, even to unbottom them, and therefore one sayd, *ἀνακαλύπτει τὰς ψυχὰς*, that is, to shake and cause heavy souls to stagger, as a house when it is shaken at the foundation, Acts 15. 24. these cause rents and divisions in the Church, and break that sweet communion that

2 Reason.

Heb. 13. 17.

Revel. 12. 15.

Gal 5. 10.
Gal. 1. 7.

Acts 15. 24.

A&S 20.30.

Titus 1.11.

2 Pet. 2.1.

2 Tim. 2.18.

*Hinc horribilis
Evangelii ex-
tinctio in Papi-
tu; quod insci-
tiâ pastorum
vel inertia diu
et licenter
grassatae sunt
corruptele, quae
puritatem do-
ctrinae paulatim
abolerent, Cal.
on 2 Tim. 2.17
Ovid. 1. Met.*

is and should be in the Church of God; so did these in *Ephesus*, that by their perverse doctrine did draw Disciples after them, *Acts* 20.30. yea, the order and comfortable walking, that is, in Christian families is disturbed by them, for they subvert whole houses, yea, by heresies hath greater prejudice come to the Church of God then ever by the greatest persecutions: *Rome* continued a faithfull City and Spouse of Christ, during all the persecutions of the Heathen Emperours; but by the increasing of those is become an harlot, and being divorced from Christ, is become the Synagogue of Satan; and then the practices of false teachers, what can tend to be more pernicious to the souls of Gods people? for heresies (which these are Instruments to spread abroad) are of a damning nature, and therefore called *αἵρεσις ἀνωθείας*, *damnable heresies*, heresies that bring damnation whereby first, damnation is brought upon them, *2 Pet. 2.1.* they are such as subvert the faith of people, *2 Tim. 2.18.* as poison to the body, so is false doctrine to the souls of people; their words are compared to a Canker, a Gangrene, and are said to eat as a Gangrene, *viz.* a Gangrene is so called, *αἶμα τὸ γράσσον*, from the eating or devouring nature of it; and the nature of it is such, that having seized on any member, it is still creeping from one part to another, never leaving till the man be destroyed by it; thus it doth without very sodain remedy; and where it hath once seized, the best courle to be taken with such. A member is that of the Poet,

Ense rescindendum est, ne pars sincera trahatur.

So how fitly doth the Apostle compare heresies, false doctrines to be to the soul as that to the body; of such a devouring nature, that unlesse there be a speedy and timely remedy provided, may tend to the destroying of the whole man, eating out one piece of Religion after another, till at length the whole be eaten out by it, but which is more, the Apostle tells us, *that they are the cause of much impiety, much sinfulness, and wickedness in conversation, verse 16.* For very seldom shall we see persons infected with this contagion, but that wee may easily discern the life and power of godlinesse to be cast off by them; but which is more yet, these are the very snares of the Devill, as a snare that is layd by him secretly (veiled over with the pretences of piety) and yet that as a snare will hold to surely, for the Devill, those that being deceived by the bayt are caught

or taken in it: This is his snare, that when all other means of destroying the soul faile, he makes use of this; this is the snare of the Devill wherein the soul that is taken, is like a bird in a snare led about captive *at his will*, 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. So that all these things considered, if such be the danger that is like to come to the Church and souls of people by false teachers; and such be the evill of heresies, that it tends so to the destruction of the Church and souls of people, surely all in their severall places, that any whit tender the peace of the Church, or the good of the souls of one another; especially the Ministers of the word, to whom the care of these is so committed; these Watchmen, Husbandmen, Stewards, in the family of God, ought they to looke to their sheep, to keepe them from this contagion; to take heed to their Churches, to keep them from this so dangerous an infection; to admonish people to take heed of this snare of the Devill, and to contend for the faith of the Gospel, against false teachers, that by their heresies, false doctrines, and erroneous opinions, would be the cause of so much evill and disturbance to the Churches of Christ, and souls of Gods people: Thus for this reason doth the Apostle so presse on *Timothy* to contend for the faith, and to withstand those, and to shun such things as tend to the subversion of the hearers, 2 Tim. 2. 14. So also the Elders of *Ephesus* are hereupon exhorted to looke to the flock committed to them, and that not onely because of the ravenous wolves that would not spare the flock, but also because of those that should rise up among themselves, and by false doctrines, perverse words, should disturb the peace of their Church, and draw multitudes after them, *Act. 20. 30.* And thus much also for this second Reason.

This ought they also to doe, with respect even to false teachers, and those that are deceived by them, that, if possible, they may be converted, and from their errors called to the knowledge of the truth, and therefore in resisting them, we are still to respect this as one end of it. Thus the Apostle exhorting *Titus* to reprove false teachers sharply, sets down this as an end of it, that they may be found in the faith, *Titus 1. 13.* for this reason also is *Timothy* exhorted with meeknesse to instruct the gainayers of the truth, if peradventure God will at any time give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and for the recovery of them out of that snare of the Devill, wherein they are taken, these otherwise might please themselves in their evill wayes, and many deceived by them might

2 Tim. 2. 25, 26.

3 Reason.

Titus 1. 13.

2 Tim. 2. 25, 26.

might be apt to think themselves in a better condition then formerly, unlesse they see the people of God, and Ministers of the Gospel, to oppose and set themselves against them, to discover their errors to them, whereby being ashamed and convinced, they may be recovered to the faith again. So that in these three respects, to preserve the faith committed unto us, the peace also of the Churches, and soules of Gods people, recovery of those that are fallen, ought we thus earnestly to contend for the faith, against those that oppose the same.

3 Doct.

Here also let me note a third thing, not unfit to be taken notice of, yet which I shall but briefly touch, (*viz.*) That the Ministers of the Gospel ought to be very carefull and frequent in remembring and stirring up of people to all watchfulnesse, and the use of all Christian diligence, whereby they may be preserved from these deceivers and their deceits. This is the practice of the Apostle here, and without question his intent to stir them up thus to looke to themselves, see the many exhortations we have in Scripture to this purpose, which shews it to be the Ministers duty thus to warne the people to be warned, so that of our Saviour, *Mat. 7.15. Take heed of false Prophets; Mat. 24.4. beware that no one deceive you, 2 Pet. 3.17. Keepe your selves, or take heed you be not led away by the error of the wicked, you fall from your own stedfastnesse*, so the Apostle John also, *2 John ver. 8. Look to your selves that we lose not the things which we have wrought*, in all which places what meane these words, *ἀλέγεται προσέχεται φυλάσσει*, to see to, take heed, and have a care of ourselves, but to shew it to be the duty of Ministers thus to warne, of people to be warned, by all Christian diligence to endeavour to preserve themselves from the deceits of false teachers.

Mat 7.15.
2 Pet. 3.17.

2 John v.8.

To the confirming whereof, the second reason of the former doctrine may well serve, where you have heard the dangers and evils that false doctrines bring to the soules of men, that therefore those who are to watch over soules, and all the people of God, as they tender the safety, and welfare of their soules, ought to be warned to take heed of those things that are so dangerous to them, therefore I shall not goe over them again, that hath formerly been spoken unto, but refer you to that which was even now delivered.

Onely take notice here, as that which may serve for another reason hereunto, that this watchfulnesse and Christian heedfulnesse which

which thus frequently in the Scripture, and by the Ministers of the word we are exhorted unto, is the means appointed by God, for the preserving and establishing of his people against the errors of deceitfull men. It is no ground for Arminians to argue from such caveats and exhortations as these, that therefore a beleever may either by false teachers or otherwise, be brought finally to fall away from grace, for the foundation of God standeth sure, and whom Christ loves he loves to the end, and with an everlasting love, which nothing shall be able to separate from: they stand not by their own power, but are by the hand and power of God kept through faith unto that salvation, prepared to be revealed in the last times, and out of his hand no power (no not of all the false teachers in the world, no not of the Devill himselfe, their Master) shall be able to pull them, but he will keep: that which by Christ was committed to him: Who also still prays for them that they may be preserved from the evil one and his temptations, and that their faith (which by false Doctrines he labours to shake) may never fail, and surely, God that hath begun a good worke in them, will also perfect it, and preservethem to his heavenly kingdom, he that can will also strengthen them, so that though many follow their wayes of destruction, and the false teachers of the last times deceive many, yea, and the world wander after the beast, and is deceived by the false prophet; Yet these few, whose names are written in the Booke of life are preserved, and our Saviour tels us of the false christis in the last times, that they shall deceive, if it were possible, even the very elect, intimating that so to deceive, as to draw them from Christ, is altogether impossible, but God will preserve them, let the deceits be never so many and prevalent. Neither is this of the surenesse of a Christians condition, ground for others to be secure, for so is the reasoning of many in these times, (that would be reckoned religious) after the manner of prophane persons, that if they are elected they shall be saved, let them live as they list, and so instead of making their calling and election sure, which we are exhorted unto: by this their wicked reasoning they give themselves to the practice of such wickednesse in their conversation, whereby they make their condemnation sure to them, or at least while they remain in such a condition, that they are in the state of condemnation, so those persons most corruptly, if they are elected, or being elected (as many such seeme confident of themselves to be) they cannot possibly fall away, they shall be saved,

H

and

John 13.1.

Jerem. 31.3.

Rom. 8.35.

1 Pet. 1.3.

John 10.28, 29.

John 17.12.

John 17.15.

Luke 22.31, 32.

Phil. 1.6.

2 Tim. 4.18.

2 Pet. 2.2.

Mat 14.5, 11.

Revel. 17.8.

Mat. 24.24.

and therefore judge such exhortations as these are to be needlesse; they cast off all this Christian diligence and watchfulnesse, and out of a kinde of vain confidence, expose themselves to all temptations in this kinde, will harken after all strange new opinions, and though never so weake in the faith, will yet make themselves Judges of the greatest controversies, will be hearers of all, even of such on whom the marks of seducers and deceivers are evident to be seen, and so all that care and diligence which they should take to themselves in avoiding occasions of this evill, and such temptations as these, is laid aside by these persons, and they leave themselves open to such evils as these, and hereby it comes to passe that they are deceived and led aside from the truth, whereby many are discovered, not to be of the elect of God, as they vainly judged themselves to be, being so easily and deeply deceived, and those that are the elect of God, being brought by such reasonings as these to be secure, and falling into this snare (as it is possible even for a childe of God, in things not fundamentall, and for a time to be led aside from the truth) yet being brought home again by God, and that as we say by weeping crosse (the Lord not suffering his to remain in the snare of the Devill) they are made to see the vanity of such reasonings as these are, and that the surenesse of their Christian condition is no ground for them to become secure and carelesse, and to cast off and neglect watchfulnesse and diligence in their Christian conversation: Thus God will not have us to be secure, but by these exhortations stir us up to watchfulnesse, that as Souldiers we may be alwayes standing on our guard, by which carefulnesse of ourselves, and watchfulnesse which he calls us unto, and also by his spirit inables us unto, (and wherein it consists, and is to be exercised, I shall afterwards shew you) doth the Lord also preserve those that are his, and keepe them from being deceived.

Use.

What now remains, but that we apply all this that hath been taken notice of in the former observations, to our selves, and to these times of ours: You have heard that in the last times, but especially in the latter part of the last times, many Antichrists were to be expected, many false teachers were to come into the world: You have heard that many Antichrists, many false teachers did arise in the Apostles times, and therefore it could not be expected that it should be otherwise in these times of ours, and what thinke you of these times of ours? doe not the many controversies that are amongst

amongst us, about matters of Religion, the parties and factions made one against another, the severall wayes and professions, and names of distinctions of Sects lately risen. and never till of late known amongst us, and our censuring and opposing one another, doe not all these together give us cause to judge, that certainly there cannot but be many false teachers, many Antichrists amongst us, at this time, and that therefore we ought to take the second and third Doctrines unto our selves also, and to set our selves to contend for the faith against the many false teachers that are amongst us, and to beware that our selves be not deceived by them, thus that we may the better performe, I shall in this use respect these two things.

I shall labour to discover and describe these many Antichrists or false teachers to you, by such marks as the Scripture gives us of them, whereby we may know who are our adversaries, with whom to contend for the faith, and whom we are to beware of.

I shall shew you how this duty is to be performed, and by what means we may be able to strengthen our selves, and be preserved from them.

For the first of these, that I may discover these many Antichrists, or false teachers unto you, that you may know of whom you are to beware, I shall endeavour to describe them unto you, by setting down the practises of the false teachers, and properties of those that were deceivers in the Apostles times, that were the many Antichrists here mentioned in the Text, their dealings and carriage towards the Churches of Christ and Ministers of the Gospel, and wayes of propagating their opinions then: And these shall I lay down as marks for the discovery of false teachers, these many Antichrists now to us, and this I cannot but judge to be a very safe rule for us to walke by in these times, for the discovery of such persons, the doctrines of those that were false teachers, of the many Antichrists in the Apostles times, and in our times may be different one from another, for as in the Apostles times, among those many false teachers then, some held this heresie, some that, some denied the resurrection, others say it was past already, some pleaded for circumcision, and the necessity of observance of legall Ordinances to salvation, others held heresies concerning the person of Christ, as denying either of his natures, &c. Thus these many Antichrists did not hold the same opinions one with another, but one oppose this, another that fundamentall truth of the Gospel, yet were they led all by

one Spirit of Antichrist and of error, to oppose the truth of the Gospel, and being led by the same Spirit, though their heresies were many and different, yet were they by that one Spirit of error whereby they were acted, carried forth to the same wayes of practice in opposing of truth, even so may that be in these times of ours, the many Antichrists in our times, the false teachers may hold heresies different from many of those in the Apostles times, and likewise from one another, as some denying the Scriptures, some the Divinity of Christs, and of the Holy Ghost, others affirming the soule to be mortall, and so some hold one heresie, some another (and it is not necessary they should concur all in the same heresies, it is true, that to an Apostasie, a generall departure from the faith, and a concurrence, if not of all, yet of very many heresies is required, by which the Papacy, the great Antichrist is to be judged, but the holding and maintaining of one heresie, contrary to the fundamentals of the Gospel, is sufficient to denominate a person to be an Hereticke, to be a false teacher, and to make him to be in the number of those that are called the many Antichrists, in the Text, yet are these also guided by one and the same Spirit of Antichrist and of error, as different as it seems to worke by reason of their different opinions; the Spirit whereby they are acted, these many Antichrists in the Apostles times, and these in our times, yea, and the great Antichrist is but one and the same Spirit of error, though it be not in all after the same measure, and doth not shew it selfe in all alike, so the Apostle *John*, 1 *Joh*. 4. 3. 6. as he makes the Spirit of Truth, whereby the people of God are gained to be but one Spirit of truth, and though he speaks as of many, every Spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh, is of God; yet is that but by reason of the many persons in whom that one Spirit works, which otherwise he speaks of but as one, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of truth, and all the people of God in their severall times, they then in the time of the Apostles, and wee now, doe partake of one and the same Spirit of Truth, and of God, though the workings and gifts of it in severall persons, may bee different, and not in all in the like measure, so though, againe, hee speake as of many, every Spirit that confesseth not Christ come in the flesh, yet it is not as if these many false prophets or Antichrists had so many different spirits of error whereby they were acted;

but

1 *John* 4. 3. 6.

but of this also he speaks as of one, *ver. 3.* This is that spirit of Antichrist which now is in the world, the spirit of errour whereby he shews those many false prophets were all acted like *Ababs* lying prophets, by one lying spirit, and that the spirit of Antichrists, though he was not then revealed, nor till some hundred years after, yet was then in the world, but now, surely in the many false prophets and Antichrists, so that the many Antichrists then, and the great Antichrist, sure had both but one and the same spirit of errour, and so we may say the same spirit is now in the world, acting in the great Antichrist, and in our many Antichrists, notwithstanding the heresies they hold may be different, and the measure of it not alike in all. Thus then their heresies and false doctrines may be different, yet the spirit whereby they are acted is one and the same; the first of these their Doctrines, I leave particularly to be examined by the word of God, and shall not pitch upon any of them in particular, in this discovery of false teachers, which I intend to make at this time: for wee see they may bee different, and wee cannot pitch upon any one, that is necessarily required in every such person, but that by others they may as well be so judged. And to search into all heresies would bee to me endlesse and impossible; but seeing the spirit that is in them, is one and the same, some generall rule I shall lay down, taken from the practice of those that had in them this spirit in these former times, and wherein this spirit did shew it selfe, and shall leave them by you, to judge whether the same spirit doth not work in the same things in these times of ours, and in whom and what you are to judge of those in whom it doth so worke, you will then easily perceive.

This then as I judge it to be a safe, and yet the easiest way, that wee can take for the discovery of these persons valours; so is it that which the Apostles follow and prescribe in their severall Epistles, (as you shall afterward heare) this is one way of trying the spirits, and this way doth our Saviour himself direct us unto, *Mat. 7. 15.* *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves; By their fruits ye shall know them:* false teachers may well be compared, to Wolves, their designe being to make spoil and havock of the sheep of Christ; this they can doe

Mat. 7. 15.

the

The characters discovering false teachers.

the more secretly and freely in sheeps garments. A Wolfe in sheeps clothing here, is nothing but a false prophet comming as a true Prophet, as one of the sheep of Christ; and this is the property of false teachers, thus to come, that so they may deceive the better, when they have hereby gotten, the people of God to have a good opinion of them. Thus of the deceivers of the last time, our Saviour tels us, they shall say *I am Christ, I am Christ, and shall deceive*, which is none other but these pretences of false teachers, that they are for Christ, they preach, they are for him, and hereby many are deceived by them; so the Apostle *Paul* tels us of the false apostles; that they are transformed, as if they were the Apostles of Christ; even as *Satan* their master transforming himselfe into an Angell of light, 2 Cor. 11. 14. Thus the false prophets of old, came like the true, as if sent of God, with thus saith the Lord; unto these doth the Apostle *Peter* compare false teachers amongst us, 2 Pet. 2. 1. and *Paul* tels us, *A form of godlinesse is put on, when the power of it is dexyed by them*; 2 Tim. 3. 5. And instances enough may be given of this, which may shew to us our danger to be the greater, as it is now the more difficult to finde out our enemy, and that therefore wee ought to take the more heed of our selves, having such enemies to deale withall; and to take heed wee be not beguiled, by fair words and pretences. All is not gold that glisters, if they shall come in sheeps clothing, if transformed as the Apostles of Christ, surely then their heresies, may be christned by them, by the names of Free-Grace, Gospel-Light, and the way of the Gospel, when there is nothing lesse in them; these are things precious to every Christian, yet as vice goes undiscovered by the name of vertue, and a thief escapes in the habit of a true man, so are many the foulest heresies, of these times set forth, by such names as these, that so they may deceive the better by them. But how now may wee be able to discern, and know these deceivers, these cheaters, Our Saviour sets you on the rule, we are now upon their fruits; *by their fruits you shall know them*.

In these particulars following did the spirit of Antichrist shew it self in the many Antichrists in the Apostles time, by which examine, whether the same spirit doth not work in these times, in the same things amongst us.

I

The first mark whereby these are to be known, is their departing

ing and breaking off from the society and communion of the people of God, in the Congregations and Churches of Christ. Herein doth the spirit of Antichrist plainly discover it self; these that have the spirit of Christ in them; esteem nothing more here then the enjoyment of fellowship with the people of God, whereby joyntly with them to hold forth the profession of the name of Christ; and therefore still joyn themselves to the Churches of Christ, as *Paul* did, as soon as he was converted, *Acts* 9. 26. and they esteem it their happiness, to be reckoned a member in that society, there is no affliction like that to them, nor is any punishment or censure on earth, reckoned so great by them; as that whereby men are cut off, from that society, a mark then it may well be, of the spirit of Antichrist, in those that will proclaim a vow, and maintain a separation from true Churches; This was the property of these false teachers, these many Antichrists in the Apostles times. Though the Churches were then such true Churches, that no one could think, that ought could be objected against them; yet did these finde pretences to break off and separate from them. This I could not avoid from making such a mark for the discovery of these, seeing the Apostle *John* makes it such a mark of these many Antichrists in the text, in the verse immediately following; And makes it his argument also, whereby to perswade the little children, to beware of them, sayth hee, *they went out from us, because they were not of us, for if they had been of us they would have continued with us*; wherein the Apostle shews that sometime they had been among them; were reckoned of the Church, though now by their departing from it, they were manifested not to be what they seemed and professed themselves to be. For, sayth the Apostle, *they went out from us*, that is, they separated themselves from us, and brake off from our society, and this departing or separation of theirs, manifesting them, not to have been in the number of true believers, is an argument of the Apostle in this Verse, to perswade us to take heed of them. By this also doth the Apostle *Paul* describe the false teachers, which he told the Elders of *Ephesus* should rise up amongst them, *Acts* 20. 30. this is to be the end of their speaking such perverse things, such heresies and false doctrines as they did, viz. that they might draw Disciples after them, iniquously: it notes their following them, and thereby their separation from that Church planted, by the Apostle *Paul*, at *Ephesus*: And this also doth *Jude* describe, to be the property of the false teachers,

Acts 9 26.

Acts 20 30.

of

of the last times, * Jude 19. these are they that separate themselves, that is, without any necessity, or

authority of God; onely to fulfill their own will, doe they separate themselves, from the true Church of God, and sound doctrine of the Apostles. And if this were a mark of false teachers, and of the spirit of Antichrist, then, surely it cannot but be so now; it is not to be wondred to see men separate from the true Churches now, when we see they did this even in the Apostles times. And if wee see men now also, to break off from the congregations, of the people of God, of which themselves, formerly were, and with whom they held communion, in the Ordinances of God, in them, that it may be said, they went out from us; and notwithstanding the evident presence of God in these Congregations blessing his Ordinances, making the Gospel effectvall, to the converting of souls, and that the Gospel, the true doctrine of the Word, be there plainly, truly, frequently, preached; the Sacraments, these Ordinances Christ hath left to his Church, of Baptisme and the Lords Supper, truly administred, and these the onely essentiall mark of a Church, peradventure some defect and want in order there may be, in which yet they professe and endeavour a Reformation, (as what Church is it that is perfect) when men I say shall protestedly maintain a separation from such Churches as these, and as none other then Antichrist, and Babylon shall esteem of them; what we may think of such persons, and the spirit that is working in them, in this particular, I shall by this, that hath been now, in this first particular spoken, leave to you to judge.

This also you shall see to have been their practice of all others to fall most foule upon, and discover most enmity against the faithfull Ministers of God, the true painfull Preachers of the Gospel, these shall of all men be most vilified, reproached, contemned, and their name cast out as evil, and this shall be the main endeavour of them,

to

* Intelligit eos disensionem facere ab Ecclesia, quoniam disciplina jugum ferre nequeant, ut qui carni addicti, a spirituali vita abhorreant, Calvin on Jude 19. Sibi ipsi fingunt peculiarem cultum, & veritatem Evangelii quam alii profitentur, aspernantur; & sese segregant ab eorum Ecclesia & ceteris, hic ἀδιαφορία, & non tantum doctrinae sed & conversationis civilis disidium & separatio; dum suo ingenio suisque cupiditatibus soli indulgent, alios omnes pra se fastidientes. Quod faciunt ἰδιότρομοι, qui sibi ipsi novas fingunt opiniones, inde incipiunt in ὀλιγάτα, & hinc in ἀπίστους, Paræus Jude 19.

to bring these into the hatred and contempt of the people, and all because they are opposed by them in their evil way, and that so themselves may worke upon people the better; when they have drawn their hearts and affections off from those who should be a means to settle them in the truth; such as was the carriage of the seditious *Corah*, and his company amongst the Israelites, against *Moses* and *Aaron*, whom God had set over them, such is the carriage of those against the Ministers of the Gospel, whom God hath made as spirituall watchmen, and therefore are they compared to these by the Apostle, who said, *they perished in the gain saying of Corah*, Jude 11. For instance of which, let us take *Paul* for an example, and their carriage towards him, *Paul*, that servant of Christ who laboured more abundantly then all the Apostles, indefatigable in his pains, ready to spend him self and to be spent, to be offered up in sacrifice for the Ministry and preaching of the Gospel, and surely I thinke we may say, that next Christ himselfe, never man spake as this man, yet never was man more scorned, more lightly set by, then this *Paul* was by these false teachers, all their endeavour was to cast all the odium that might be on the person of *Paul*, if possible to make him odious to the people, observe their dealings with him; First, they question his calling, whether he had a lawfull calling to the Ministry and Apostleship or no, or whether he had not invaded it, without any lawfull calling at all therunto, and indeed this they did suggest to the people, that *Paul* had no lawfull calling to the Ministry, to the Apostleship at all; this is evident in this, that *Paul* is so necessitated to dispute, to assert his call to the Apostleship, in this he spends almost two whole Chapters in the Epistle to the *Galatians*, and begins presently on this, even in the beginning of the Epistle, Chap. 1. 12. He sayth he, *received not his Gospel of men, nor was he taught it but by revelation of Jesus Christ*, and this he goes to prove particularly, by relation of his conversation, and the manner of his call to the Apostleship, which surely *Paul* of so humble a selfe-denying spirit would never have done, had he not (as he sayth elsewhere) been compelled to this boasting by the false Apostles, suggesting to the *Galatians*, that he was not an Apostle, and that not from Jesus Christ, but from man he had learned his Gospel; thus also did they amongst the *Corinthians*, almost all the latter Epistle is concerning such things, 1 Cor. 9. 2. he proves his Apostleship by a nother argument, appealing

Jude 11.

See *Paul* on
this place.

to the *Corinthians*, who were able to testify that he was so; they were the seal of his Apostleship, and therefore saying, *If I am not an Apostle to others*; what can be more plainly intimated, then that this, he was denied by some to be, and which he proves to the *Corinthians* by the effect of his Ministry on them: Thus in this they laboured to asperse him in questioning his calling.

And though his gifts were very eminent and excellent, yet how did they asperse and undervalue him in these also, as if he had been a very weak man, and altogether unable, at least wise, in comparison of them, to preach the Gospel, this is the meaning of that, *2 Cor. 10. 10.* his letters sayes, they are strong and powerfull, he can write strongly, but he is no Preacher, his bodily presence is weak and his speech is contemptible, as who would say, he is but an idiot in speech, it is not worth the hearing to hear him preach, and therefore they much commended themselves, and made as though the not coming of *Paul* to *Corinth* was because of them, that he durst not appeare himselfe but sends his Epistles, as appears from what follows in the next verse, *ver. 11.* *Let such a one know*, sayth he, *that such as we are in word, by letters being absent, such will we be also indeed, being present*, thus also in his gifts they laboured to asperse and undervalue him.

1 Cor. 16. 5.

And then if they could discern any failing in him, this would they make use of to the utmost to prejudice him, if he faile in a promise that he had made of coming to see them in *Corinth*, and came not at the time appointed, which yet he shews them the reason of, *Ephes. 1. 2.* and protests that it was out of love to them, and to spare them, yet these consider not any reason, but take occasion hereby to asperse him for breach of promise, to accuse him of dishonesty, levity, and inconstancie in his word, that with him it was yea and nay, no constancie and truth in his word, and by this they take occasion to asperse also his very Doctrines, as if that were like himselfe, as light, as unconstant, as he was, and this, above all other, goes to the heart of *Paul*, to have his Doctrine aspersed, he cares not what he suffers in his own person in comparison, so that be not blemished, and to have any thing cast upon that, goes to the heart of him, and therefore before he comes to the clearing of himselfe in that second Chapter, he first cleares his Doctrine, and seems willing to take all that imputation of lightnesse on himselfe, that when he did take counsell he did use lightnesse, it might be yea and nay

may with him, as who would say, be it as they charge us, yet what is that to our word, why is that charged? God is faithfull, his word is not like us, yea and nay, but *all the promises of God are in him yea, and in him Amen.* 2 Cor. 1. 11, 17, 18, 19, 20. If he take any thing of them for his subsistence (for as for riches, poor man, he never sought them) *and is not the labourer worthy of his hire?* may not they who sow spirituall things, expect to reap of mens carnall? even as they that served the Altar did live of the Altar: Here they charge him with covetousnesse, as if he came but to make a prey of them, and coozen them of their goods and estates, and therefore to take off this aspersiō, sometimes he labours with his hands, that so the Gospel may not be burthenſome to any; and sometime (as when he was among the Corinthians, whose Churches were so much troubled by these seducers his enemies, who ly in weight to take all occasion against him) he sayth that hee robbed other Churches, and tooke wages from other Churches, that though in want, yet was he not burthenſome to any of them, and his wants were supplied by others, even by the brethren from *Macedonia*, and why was all this? he tels you, it is to cut off an occasion from them that would have it (whereby it seems they did but ly in weight for an occasion in this to asperse him) and that they might not have an occasion of boasting in any thing, that he might not boast likewise, for it seems those false apostles, to allure the people the better to them, did preach *gratis* to them, would require nothing of them, this they boasted in, for themselves, and with this sought they occasion to asperse *Paul*, who to prevent it, gives them no such occasion, but among the *Corinthians* preacheth as freely as themselves, that in what they boast he may be found equall with them, 2 Cor. 11. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Thus you see what their labours was against *Paul*, how all their endeavours was to render him odious and contemptible, and why was all this? see *Gal. 4. 17.* *They zealously affect you, but not well, and would exclude that you might affect them, they affect you but not well it is not out of pure love but for their own ends,* &c. as those that are suitors in marriage to a maid, where are many corivalls together, will labour to exclude one the other by all means possible, that so themselves may be affected, and obtain the match; to this doth the Apostle allude, and shews that in all these courses they tooke for the disparaging of him, this was their end, that he

2 Cor. 11. 12.
Gal. 4. 17.
See *Beza*. An.
not. on this
place.
*Hoc commune
est artificium
omnibus Satanae
ministris, alie-
nare plebem à
sub pastore ut
ad se alliciant,
& quasi sublato
emulo, vacuum
possessionem oc-
cupent; Siquis
attente, pru-
denterque ob-
servet, videbit
inde semper il-
los facere ini-
tium.* Calvin.
in *Gal. 4. 17.*

being excluded out of the affections of people, themselves might be affected. Thus was this the main thing they laboured in, conceiving, could they but eff. Et this, to worke them to a slighting of *Paul*, they might easily prevail in other things, and this they did doe with the *Galatians*, for he who was so deereely beloved by them, that for his sake, and to doe him good, they would not have spared to have pulled out their eyes, was now by the deceitfull working of these, even reckoned as an enemy by them; and so having gotten *Paul* out of their affections, how then did they bewitch them, and lead them away from the Gospel, into any their errours at their pleasure, and thus to alienate the affections of people from their Pastors, is the first and main designe of false teachers, wherein the spirit of the many Antichrists doth shew it selfe working in them, and without which they cannot expect to accomplish any of their designs against them. And now beloved, what thinke you, doth not the same spirit that was in these many Antichrists, in this particular, shew it selfe in these times of ours: Consider we the faithfull Ministers of the Gospel, whom God hath raised up in these times of ours, who have been instruments of converting many souls to God, in whose hearts are such Epistles written of them, that are to be known and read of all men, and whereby they are manifested to be true Ministers of Christ: Yet who so vilified, scorned, and reproached, as these? what names of scorne and contempt are cast upon them? to be called Black-coats, Priests, Presbyterian persecutors, are the best names that are to be heard concerning them, from the mouthes of many, who yet would be esteemed Religious: They are represented but as so many deceivers of the people, surely none seem to be the objects of so much hate and scorn in these times as they, and all is but to bring people to contemne them, who yet have been brought to God, and converted by them, and they are dealt with in the same manner that as *Paul* was, their calling to the Ministry is questioned by them, for the unlawfulness whereof (as these conceive) they may be reckoned and are called Antichristian Ministers by them. And oh how many persons are taught to raise questions concerning the calling of Ministers, whereby they come to despise and contemne them, who are otherwise very ignorant in the fundamentals of Religion, and yet this are they most of all cryed against for, by these who

who invade the same work without any calling at all, they that seeke no calling for themselves to that work, farther then their own private apprehensions and opinions of themselves, and their own abilities, are yet the men, that above all others, cry up and maintains these questions of the order of the calling of Ministers, as those false teachers that raised such stirs concerning *Pauls* calling, had themselves no calling at all, for so the Apostles said, of those false teachers that went to *Antioch*, that they gave no such commandment to them, that is, that though they went out from them, yet they had received from them no command or commission at all to preach amongst them, for their abilities in preaching the Gospel, these are so censured and condemned as if they were altogether unfit for the dispensation of it: And how are all their failings taken notice of, for the aspersing of them? especially, how are they aspersed with covetousnesse, as seeking their own good in all, and not the good of the people, and all because of those set stipends taken by them, and by the Magistrate allowed unto them, and to this end is it, such great controversies are moved about taking and paying of Tithes in these times, of which give me leave to say what I judge briefly, viz. that I judge it very lawfull, and in some sort necessary, for the Christian Magistrate to make provision for the encouraging of the Ministers and Ministry of the Word, and that by way of maintenance in a comfortable manner. That the way wherein this is to be done is indifferent to them to make choyce of, be it by Tithes or any other lawfull proportionable way whatsoever: That the way of Tithes is not more unlawfull in it selfe then any other way, but that it may as lawfully be made choyce of to that end; as any other way whatsoever: That the proportion of Tithes cannot be necessarily required and demanded by the authority of the Word of God, the Gospel appointing, that *he who preacheth the Gospel should live of the Gospel*, but not necessity requiring the payment of Tithes that proportion, and that therefore this proportion cannot be challenged,

ceremoniali, sed iure morali, per siquidem est ut, minister à populo alatur; dignus (est enim operarius mercede sua; & qui Evangelio inservit, æquum est, ut de illo vivat: proinde stipendia ministris, persolvantur ex agris, sive ex adibus, sive pecunie numeratâ, sive in decimis; nihil refert, modo non sordide sed honeste sustententur; Retinent quidem alicubi mercedes istæ vetus nomen decimarum; In multis autem locis non appellantur decime, sed stipendia, vel salaria, & sane, potius reverâ sunt mercedes, quæ laboribus ministrorum debentur, quam decime. Pet. Mart. loc. Com. p. 904,

Cum iam olim Christus venerit, decimarum per solutio non est amplius ceremonialis, quemadmodum fuit, ante Christi adventum, quando per decimas homines Christum venerabantur in carne venturum, eique seipsos & omnia sua debere fatebatur: quâ eadem ratione primitias omnium rerum suarum persolvebant. Nostri autem hodie accipiunt decimas; verum quo iure; non sane

to belong to Ministers *jure divino*, but *jure humano*, which yet as you have heard may be as lawfully appointed by the Magistrate as any other way; and therefore that if any inexpediency be found in this way it may be lawfully altered, and removed; and any other lawful way that may be judged more expedient, be substituted in the stead thereof. But in all the controversies of these times about this way of Tythes, what is aimed at, not to shew the inexpediency so much, or inconvenience that may accompany this way; as either to deny to Ministers any set maintenance at all, and to the Magistrate any power at all to appoint the same, or else (as that which is principally aimed at) to render the godly Ministers, hereby odious and contemptible to the people; and when they have done this, they think they may the better spread and propagate their Errours amongst the people; and thus that I may conclude this second particular also; I leave it to your consideration, That whereas this practice of the many Antichrists was a mark of them then, whether it be not so also now, and see whether this spirit of error doth not shew it self now, as well as formerly, and in whom it doth so appeare, and what we may judge hereby of these in whom it doth so appear, I refer all to your consideration.

3

The property of these many Antichrists or false teachers in the Apostles time was; that they should never be seen meddling, but where the consciences of men had been first wrought on by the Ministry of the Gospel, and opened to receive the impressions of divine truths: You should not see them meddle among the heathen, where Christ had not been named, to preach their Gospel for conversion of souls; this pains they were never willing to undergo, but where men were already converted, and Churches began to be planted, there was time for them to be working and not otherwise. Thus shall we find it to have been with the Apostle *Paul* in his time; so did these persons deal with him; for at *Antioch* when *Paul* had first preached the Gospel there, and the Gospel had begun to work upon the consciences of men; but were as yet green and tender, not well settled in the faith; in this opportunity came the false teachers, down among them, *Acts 15. 1.* So doth the Apostle tell the *Ephesians*, that after his departure *should men arise, speaking perverse things among them, Acts 20. 30.* and thus was it also, almost in all the Churches where *Paul* had been, as appears by the Epistles written

Acts 15. 1.

Acts 20. 30.

to them. So that they did even set themselves to follow *Paul*, that when he had first broken the Ice in preaching the Gospel, yea, and born the brunt also of persecution, (for that they would be sure to shift themselves well enough of; being very unwilling to suffer persecution for the crosse of *Christ*, Gal. 6. 12.) then and not before is it time for them to shew themselves: and this *Paul* charges them with, with whom hee had to do at *Corinth*, 2 Cor. 10. 15. saying of himself, *That he did not boast in things without their measure*, nor in anothers mans line, in things made ready to their hand; but they had preached the Gospel to them, who had been converted thereby, and they were ready to do the like in the Regions beyond them, even where *Christ* was not named; and hereby intimating it to be otherwise, with these; their boasting was beyond their measure in the line and labour of others; they had not been fathers to any in the Gospel, as *Paul* had been; Conversion was a labour too difficult for them to be employed in; but *Paul* must preach to the World, and when by his labour men had been squared, as fit stones for the Lords building, then come they to withdraw them from the truth, that hereby they may be able to boast of them as their converts. Thus it was then; consider it is not so now, look on these places amongst us that are barren and destitute of the means of grace, where the vision fails, & the people are ready to perish, for want of the bread of life; when shall ye see any of these, that now draw men from the truth, deal with such a people and preach their Gospel amongst them, but let the Lord by his providence send into this place such a godly Minister, who is frequent, instant, in season, and out of season, preaching the Word, and whose Ministry is blessed to the bringing of many unto *Christ*, then will these shew themselves to pervert, if possible, these young Converts from the truth, and thereby rob the faithfull Ministers of the fruits of their painfull labours.

*Jam liberius
pungit pseudopos-
tolos, qui
cum in alienam
messum manus
intulissent, au-
debant tamen
eis obviare,
qui suo sudore
& industria, lo-
cum illis para-
verunt; Paulus
Corinthorum
Ecclesiam edi-
ficaverat, non
absque maximo
certamine, diu
omne vis diffi-
cultatibus, suc-
cedunt isti, vi-
am stratam, ia-
nuamque aper-
tam inveniunt;
ut videantur
aliqui, sibi im-
pudenter arro-
gant, quod nul-
lo iure illis com-
petebat, & Pau-
li labores ele-
vant. Calvin. in*

2 Cor. 10. 15. *Nos non gloriamur in alienis laboribus, quasi convertissemus ad fidem, quos non convertimus, sicut emuli, qui gloriantur in vobis Corinthiis, qua non converterunt, Pseudopostoli gloriantur in vobis, quos ego ad salutem converti. Dixon. in 2 Cor. 10. 15.*

4
The third
Sermon.

1 Tim. 6. 3.

CONSIDER we the knowledge of these persons, and the Doctrines held out by them, of what nature are they? surely altogether about difficult controversies, unprofitable questions, and strifes about words and expressions, and which doe also beget strife and division, but faith and love, and the profitable things of the Gospel are laid aside by them, by this doth the Apostle *Paul* describe such, that thereby we may know them, 1 Tim. 6. 3. That he teacheth otherwise, *ἑτεροδιδασκαλῆ*, either for the manner of it, departing from Apostolicall truth, or for the matter, from that simplicity that should be in the expressing thereof, *he harketh not to the sound words, &c. and doctrine according to godlinesse*, this sound doctrine is that he had taught before, and delivered concerning the duties of Masters, Stewards, &c. indeed, of all sorts of Christians in their severall places towards each other, which, as sound doctrine, *Titus* also is commanded to teach, *Tit.* 2. 1. and which all the Ministers of the Gospel ought to teach to the people, but as for those persons, they attend not to such things as these: Matters of duty are too low things for them to be exercised in, repentance and the exercise thereof, seems to be one of these principles and first rudiments which they have gone past and out-learned, but if they attend not to this, what doe they apply themselves unto? Observe, questions and strife of words, it is altogether about *Queries*, that may beget unprofitable disputes and controversies; (as the Devils method to deceive our first parents, was all by way of *Querie*, God sayd thus and thus) and strifes also about words, all their Religion lies in controversies, strifes, questions, and these not about the profitable things of the Gospel, the substantials of Religion, but a meer strife about words, wrangling and jangling about these and these expressions, which may administer any occasion of dispute unto them, and about these observe, *πορνῆ*, he is sick, he doeth, he is even mad upon them, and all his delight is to be employed in such controversies as these are, and what the effect of these things is, the Apostle shews that these beget envie, strife, with railings at and evil surmisings, concerning those who teach the truth, as also, perverted disputings of men of corrupt mindes, so that these things tend not to the increase of love, but rather of discord, of differences, and division amongst men, to the eating out of true Religion, yea, and the very subversion of the faith of the hearers, and therefore
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are all the Ministers of the Gospel so pressed to avoid such strifes of words and foolish questions, wherein (as you here see) the spirit of error did shew it selfe in the false teachers of these times *2 Tim.* 2. 14, 23. And here observe the properties of these persons, and what the effects of this vain knowledge was among them, see, such a one understands nothing, the Apostle makes him to be very ignorant in the Gospel, no withstanding all the pretence to knowledge that is in them, he is very ignorant in sound Doctrine, and what is more usuall, then to see the greatest questionists, whose great employment is in such controversies as these to be of all others most ignorant in the principles of sound Doctrine and of true Religion; they are like empty barrels which make a great sound when nothing at all is in them, and by reason of their boasting in knowledge, and these their great controversies (yet great ignorance that is in them that they understand nothing, know nothing as they ought) are they compared by the Apostle *Peter*, *2 Pet.* 2. 7. *Jude* 12. to be wells and clouds without water, that promise much water, much understanding, you would judge to be in them by their language, who yet have nothing of true knowledge in them, but are altogether dry and barren, even as wells and clouds without water.

And if so empty, wonder not then at what follows, another of their properties, that as empty clouds are tossed up and down with every winde, as they are carryed by the change of the winde, now this way, now that; so these to be with every winde of Doctrine, as the Apostle speaks, *Ephes.* 4. 14. to be unsettled in their opinions, nor knowing what to fixe themselves upon, but run from this thing to that thing, of this way and Sect to day, of another to morrow, and so are ready to receive, and are blown away by the blast of every vain and new opinion, no wonder, for you heare them to be commonly *ἀμαθῆς*, unlearned, very ignorant persons, empty clouds, yet you see, sick and mad upon questions and strifes of words, what is it then can stay them, but they must be lyable to every blast, and be also *ἀκίνητοι*, unstable, as these two words, unlearned, and unstable, are joyned together concerning them, *2 Pet.* 3. 16. and are called by the Apostle *Jude*, *ver.* 13. *wandering stars*, for this their inconstancie and unsettlednesse in their Doctrines and opinions: thus you see how unsettled they are, that in matters of Religion which they pretend unto, you shall not know what they are, nor where to finde them.

*Nec mihi
quam stelle er-
raticæ in motu
sibi constant isti
in doctrinâ
suâ. Dixon.*

Yet observe this moreover, ever concerning them, that though they are noted to be so ignorant, so unconstant and unsetled, yet are they also noted to be very proud and conceited, so sayth the Apostle, *1 Tim. 6. 3. τειλωται, he is puffed up*, such a one *inflatur*, is even blown up, and twolne with a conceit of himselfe and his ability, this is the property of such kinde of persons, and of such kinde of knowledge, to puffe them up and make them conceited, as if none had such notions, none such knowledge as themselves; the true wisdom, that that is from above, worketh humility, so that they who are endued with it are peaceable, *Jam. 3. 17 &c.* but this knowledge or wisdom of theirs, which is from below, (of which that of the Apostle may be truly said, that it puffeth up, *1 Cor. 8. 1.*) causeth pride whereby comes contention. The Apostle also notes them to be heady and high minded, *2 Tim. 3. 4.* This they manifest in their commending of themselves, as if none had such knowledge and abilities as they, as is the propertie of ignorant and conceited persons, this *Paul* notes to be in the false teachers at *Corinth*, with whom he had to doe, and therefore calls them such as commend themselves, *2 Cor. 10. 12.* and shews the cause of this their pride and selfe commendation, to be their measuring themselves with themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, had they compared themselves with *Paul*, and other the renowned servants of God, they might soon have been sensible of their own emptiness, but they had no other rule of judging themselves by then that apprehension they had of themselves, and that vain conceit that their followers had of them, and hereby did not understand how vain and empty they were, and also, in their villifying and disparaging all others in comparison of themselves, judging and speaking very meanly of them and their abilities, as those did of *Paul*, whom, in comparison of themselves, they much undervalued to the Corinthians, as one that could not preach the Gospel as they did, as one that was but an Ideot in speech in comparison of them, and whose presence was weake, despicable, and of no account at all, *2 Cor. 10. 10.* and doe therefore also carry themselves very proudly and scornfully towards them; as also in their lofty language, high words and expressions wherein they deliver themselves, and in which they (neglecting the simplicity of the Gospel) affect to deliver themselves, called by the Apostles, *2 Pet. 2. 18. Jude 18. ὑψηλὰ, swelling words of vanity*, as if their apprehensions were
far

saire above an ordinary reach, and the mysteries of their notions, could not by suitable language be brought down to the understanding of vulgar capacities, as also, in that though they are so ignorant, so inconstant, and, as appears by their various alterations, so unresolved in their opinions, yet that they are such bold opposers and disputers against the truth, and censurers of all that any whit differ from them, never to be convinced and brought over unto it: Therefore are they called, *ἀντιδιαβάτοι* gain-sayers and such as oppose and set themselves opposite to truth, *2 Tim. 2. 15.* as *J. mes* and *J. m. bres* the Magicians of *Egypt*, by their enchantments resisted *Moses*, so these *ἀντιπαύται*, set themselves to stand and oppose the truth, *2 Tim. 3. 8.* and therefore very seldom convinced and brought over to it, yea, they are said to blaspheme truth; and speak evil of it, though they do not understand it, and it be saire above their reach, *Jude 10.* the things they know not, they blaspheme: but as for their own opinions as slightly as they take them up, and as uncertain as they are of them, being as you heard, carried up and down with every blast: Yet oh! with what confidence and boldness will they assert and affirm them, though never so contrary to the truth; called therefore by the Apostle *τόλμανται*, bold, being so impudently audacious in their affirmations; such as will appear in the maintenance of any thing with the greatest confidence that may be. And now (beloved Christians) put these things together, wherein this spirit of errour did shew it self, in these times of the Apostles in these false teachers; concerning the nature of their opinions and properties that were in them; and consider whether this same spirit, worketh not now also; whether wee may not see such in whom this vain knowledge too much abounds, and whose Religion seems wholly, to be put in such questions, controversies, strife of words, unprofitable janglings and disputes, which tend to draw men from the truth, and pervert the faith of the hearers; and may not such be observed to neglect sound doctrine even to be mad and doting upon unprofitable questions: and may not such be notwithstanding also observed, to be very ignorant in the principles of true religion, the profitable things of the Gospel, very uncertain and unsettled in themselves, carried up and down with every winde of doctrine, yet very proud, boasters, commending themselves, undervaluing others; censuring these that differ from them, railing against the truth, and boldly asserting their own notions in oppo-

2 Pet 2 10.

sition unto it, consider I say whether this same Spirit doth not in these things now shew it self amongst us of this time also.

4

Let us consider their practices and manner of dealing with people to propagate their opinions among them, and seduce them from the truth; herein shall we see much of subtilty and devillish policy, for (in gen. rall) all is carried on by much subtilty; as the Serpent by his craft, beguiled *Eve*, so doe these hereby draw men from the simplicity of the Gospel, *2 Cor. 11. 3.* and by the Apostle are we also warned of their subtilty and method of deceiving, *Ephes. 4. 14.* even as Cheaters with the Dice, for to such doth the Apostle there allude and compare the practices of these persons: but more particularly and leaving the things already mentioned in the fore-going particulars, (which are most of them Priests of their policy, for the seducing of souls, *viz.*) their comming in sheeps clothing, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ, their vilifying the Ministers of the Gospel, and endeavouring to bring them into hatred and contempt, their commending of themselves and censuring of others, we may do well yet in severall things, to observe their practices; consider wee then the persons with whom they deal, and the manner of their dealing with them. The persons with whom they deal are such (as you have already heard) that are converted already to the faith; for with others they care not to meddle; but among these also they have their choice, and therefore you shall seldom see them meddling, with ancient professors, such as are settled in the knowledge of the truth, and not likely to be carried up and down with the blast of every opinion, such old birds (as I may say) that will not be caught with their chaff; such as will try before they trust, and weigh things in the ballance of the Sanctuary before they do receive them, these they have little hope of doing good (as they reckon) upon; and therefore dare not venture on them: but with whom then surely these that are weak in the faith; as Cheaters, they deal not with the understanding old, or the strong men in religion, but with the new converts, with the little children, those who have been newly brought to the faith, that are weak in it, and therefore wisest judges to be perplexed with doubtfull disputations; that as yet are not able to relish strong meat, but have need to be fed with milk, to be taught the principles of the Oracles of God; These whom they look on as yet to be unsettled, and therefore easie to be altered and drawne from the truth, these

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are the persons, they deal withall, therefore they shew themselves in places, where the people have but newly come; and though some work be done byt; yet the consciences of men remaining yet green and tender, easie to be bowed and wrought upon; They will not stay till the Gospel hath been there any long time, least their market be over, and they disabled by it from doing the hurt they intended, and this as appears by the History of the *Acts*, and *Epistles* of the Apostles, was their practice, they never stayed long after *Paul*, but as soon as his worke begun to appeare, then they shew themselves to the disturbance of it, therefore as they are unstable and ignorant themselves, so is their dealings with those, whom in that respect they judge to be like themselves, and are said to feed upon unstable souls, *2 Pet. 2. 19.* therefore is this warning in the Text (as you heard) given to the little children, as who were of all most liable to temptations of this sort, and in most danger of being assaulted by those their spirituall enemies, and the Apostle will tell you plainly with whom they most deale, and over whom they most prevaile, namely, women, silly women, that come not to the knowledge of the truth (thus dealing with them fult as the Devil did with *Eve*) in whom passion is strong, and judgement very weak, and by whose means they may the better be able to worke upon their husbands, and which draw them also from the truth. *Thus doe they lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of truth, 2 Tim 3. 6, 7.* Thus we see their dealing is with those that as little children are weak in the faith, and the manner of the dealing with them is as of cheaters with little children, they are said in this fore-alleged place to creepe into houses, to deceive these silly women; The Apostle *Paul*, who was ready to take all opportunities of doing good, tels us he did preach not onely publicly, but in houses also, *Acts 20. 20.* so that the exercise of religious duties, of preaching the Word in houses, is not here as unlawfully censured and condemned by the Apostle, for then should he condemne his own practice; yet was his preaching in houses far different from this of theirs, noted to be a creeping into them, his was publicly as well as in houses, and therefore not in contempt of, nor in opposition unto the publike assemblies of the Churches, but that he might take all occasions and opportunities of doing good, but these creepe into houses, shunning publike assemblies, that so

in

The characters discovering false teachers.

in a secret close manner they may deale with persons; yea and that they may deale with them singly and alone, as cheaters will set on children when alone and from their parents or guardians, under whom they are for protection and direction; so these false teachers, though they came to those places where *Paul* preached the Gospel, yet would they stay till he were gone, not shewing themselves till his departure: Therefore he sayth to the Elders of *Ephesus*, that such should rise after his departure, his severall Epistles doe manifest as much, that they still tooke the opportunity of his absence, that so singly and alone they might deale with them; and as the Devill set upon *Eve* when alone, her husband *Adam* not with her, so those who deale with little children in the faith, to pervert them from the faith, endeavour to single them out from others, and set upon them when alone, and so have not the assistance of their spirituall parents, the Ministers of the Gospel, or of those who are more sound in the faith, that are to watch over them for the preservation of them, and this is it that is noted in this their creeping into houses.

Thus they labour to deale with them singly and alone, and in this respect, woe be indeed to him that is alone; then have they their feigned flattering words, with such children are taken, and with such doe they deceive, and make merchandize of the souls of men, *2 Pet. 2. 3. With feigned words they shall make merchandize of you.*

They will pretend to have abundant off love and care of them and their souls, so doe cheaters deal with little children, who are apt to follow those who pretend to love them, and so doe these with the little children in the faith they deale withall, they will pretend to have much love to them, and pitty to their souls, grieving to see them (as they say) misled, and so as *Abraham* by such like speeches, stole away the hearts of the people from following *David*, *2 Sam. 15. 2.* so these by such speeches steale away the hearts of the people from the truth of the Gospel, this property of theirs the Apostle notes, *Gal. 4. 17. Inhumanity* they zealously affect you, pretending to have an exceeding great measure of love and affection to you, that so they may deceive you.

Their high language which out of pride, they were noted before to use, is also to amaze the understandings of those who are weak in the faith, with whom they deale, and hereby also do they deceive, for

for by their swelling words of vanity, do they feed upon unstable souls, 2 Pet. 2. 18.

And to entice the *little children* the better to them, they make large promises unto them, as of liberty; with which children are much taken, 2 Pet. 2. 19. they promise liberty to them; but what liberty, not true Christian liberty purchased by Christ, a liberty from sin, but rather a carnall liberty, licentiousnesse, rather to the practice of any thing, and to become servants to sin. And with this are carnall persons (who esteeme the easie yoke of the Gospel a yoke of bondage to them) much taken; to be under any authority, that they cannot endure, as against that liberty of theirs of practising what they will, which they challenge to belong to them; All Government, Civill and Ecclesiasticall shall be reproached by them, because opposite to this carnall liberty of theirs, and therefore are noted by the Apostle to be *such as despise dominion and speak evil of dignities*, 2 Pet. 2. 10. Jude 3. and therefore are said to have perished in the gain-saying of Core, who perished in the rebellion against Moses, Jude 11. Thus they promise liberty to them which is that which naturally please all men; yet doe they presse on them the things asserted by themselves, their own opinions, with the greatest necessity that may be, as if all Religion, yea salvation itself were wrapped up and did consist in them. Therefore are they always, & altogether pressing these opinions of theirs, as if there were no Religion without them, nor were any to be judged Christians, that come not up unto them, this may be seen in the practice of the false teachers at *Galatia*, what appears to have been the summe of their Doctrine, but their opinion of circumcision; and with what necessity to salvation they did presse it, the whole Epistle can witness, even as if there could not be any salvation, any justification, without it: This seems of all others to be a most sad thing, for men to put so much weight on their particular opinions, especially being about externall administrations (as of circumcision controverted amongst them then, and baptism controverted amongst us now in divers particulars concerning it) as if all Religion were laid at stake in them and their opinions, when yet the Apostle tels us, that *neither circumcision availeth any thing in Christ Jesus, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature* Gal. 6. 15. yet was this their practice, and hereby many weak Christians, apprehending a necessity
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even to salvation in such things, and bewitched by them, yea to use the Apostles phrase, *compelled to their opinions*, Gal. 6. 12. *They compel you to be circumcised.* And now consider whether this spirit of error doth not worke amongst us also in these particulars, whether men proceed not in these very wayes to propogate their evill opinions amongst us, dealing most, if not onely, with these who are weake in the faith, creeping into houses, to single them out by themselves, and deale with them when alone, using such flattering words, pretending such affection to the welfare of their souls, and labouring with swelling words to amaze their weake understandings, promising such a kinde of liberty, and yet pressing such like of their opinions, even concerning outward things, with the like necessity, consider we I say whether these things are not thus practized amongst us at this time.

Thus have I now gone over these severall particulars, whereby I have endeavoured to discover false teachers by their properties to you: and now let me beseech you, to try the spirits whether they are of God or no: it is possible I may incur much censure from some persons for the things here delivered, but as I have herein laboured to discharge my own conscience by it in this point, so necessary to be considered in these times, so may any of the people of God be made more wary hereby to looke to themselves, and enabled to discern such persons, and so be preserved from them, I have my reward. As for those wicked men and deceivers; to whom these marks doe agree, they may possibly, as their manner is, waxe worse and worse deceiving, and by the just judgement of God being deceived, but let us be sure God will one day pluck off the vizard of these persons, and notwithstanding their pretences, discover with what lying spirit they are led, so that their madnesse shall in their destruction be manifested to all, to the comfort of the people of God, and the everlasting shame and confusion of their own faces.

But let us now leave these and come to our selves, and in the second part of this application, consider how we may be able to contend for the faith, and be preserved from the decits of these persons, for which briefly take these directions that concerne Ministers and people.

I For the Ministers of the Gospel, whom God hath made stewards in his family to dispence the Word of Life, Watchmen for the souls
of

of Gods people, as those that shall give an account of them, how ought they to watch over them, that they may keep them from the danger of this infection? This ought they to doe, by discovering this danger to the people of God, and warning them to beware of it, so did *Paul* to the Elders of the Church, and to the people of God at *Ephesus*, foretelling them of the coming of deceivers by speaking perverse things to draw multitudes after them, *Act. 20. 30.* and as he did also to *Timothy*, whom he warnes of diverse of them particularly, and by name, as *Himeneus*, *Philetus*, *Alexander*, whom he especially warnes him to take heed of, *2 Tim. 4. 14.*

By opposing those who oppose themselves to the truth, and by their corrupt Doctrines endeavour to pull down the building God had made them instruments to raise, and pervert the souls of Gods people by their Ministry converted. All the labour of a Minister of the Gospel seems to be in vain, towards those who by the deceits of these persons are led aside from the truth. This made *Paul* to have such a feare in him concerning the *Galatians*, least his labour should have been in vain towards them: And as he did expect, and would rejoyce in the successe and profit of his labours among them: So this made him with such earnestnesse to contend for the faith, and oppose those who thus laboured to marre and hinder the benefit of his endeavours, and is herein a pattern to all the Ministers of the Gospel, that as he opposed *Elymas* when he would have perverted the Deputy from the faith, so should they also, all those who seeke to subvert the faith of Gods people.

By being frequent and instant in teaching the Word of God, whereby the people of God may be instructed and established in the faith, and armed against the deceits of those persons, thus are the Elders of *Ephesus* upon this ground exhorted to feed the flock that was among them, by reason of those seducers that would arise among them after his departure, *Act. 20. 28.* and is *Timothy* and so all Ministers on the same ground, exhorted to teach the Word in season, and out of season, because of the time coming wherein men would not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own lusts should heap up teachers to themselves, having itching eares, *2 Tim. 4. 3. 4.* And herein endeavouring after sound Doctrine, the Doctrine of the faithfull Word, *Titus 2. 1.* avoyding contentions about words, vain janglings, unprofitable questions and disputes, which as the

An Apostle sayth, tends to nothing but the subversion of the hearers; yet instructing them also in the points that are controverted; in those particular truths, from which they may be in most danger to be seduced, so did *Paul* with the *Corinthians*: How many questions did he satisfie them in throughout his first Epistle? and in the 15 Chapter thereof, giving them such large satisfaction in the Doctrine of the Resurrection, which was controverted, and by some denied among them. So also in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, so largely handling the Doctrine of Justification, to give satisfaction to them in that particular, which was so much controverted by the false teachers.

And if possible, in publike conventions, to make joyned and publike Declarations against such persons; and the errors taught by them, the false doctrine taught by the false teachers at *Antioch*; occasioned that first and famous Synod at *Jerusalem*, *Act. 15* in which after much reasoning by the Apostles and Elders, their false doctrine was condemned, and letters written to the Churches to beware of them, and those things taught by them; the reproofe that is by many, must needs have the more authority going along with it, so also must publike Declarations against an error, to the stopping of the mouths of gain sayers, and satisfaction of the people of God, when they shall be so publicly warned to take heed of such persons.

With respect to the people of God themselves, that are or may be in danger of being assaulted by these persons, unto them also Ien me give these two directions.

That their care ought to be to shun and avoid such persons, and their society, to whom these marks and characters given of the many Antichrists mentioned in the Text, to have been in the Apostles time, doe agree: that they be not too familiar, nor over-intimate with them, but shun their society that they may be ashamed, and themselves preserved from their deceits; as men would run from those that would infect them with the plague, so ought the people of God to shun the society of these persons, *2 Tim. 3. 5. Turn aside from such persons, and after once or twice admonition avoid them, Tit. 3. 10.* to which accords that of our Saviour, *Mat. 24. When they say, loe here, or loe there, is Christ in the desert, or in the secret places, yet believe them not, neither goe out after them; though many doe, and follow*

follow their wayes of destruction, yet let not us by their example, be moved to gne out after them, and lea this be chiefly an admonition to weake Christians, whom you may perceive to be in most danger, most likely to be assaulted of all others, and to whom the warning in the Text is especially given. It had been well for Eve, had she stood at a distance with the Serpent, and never harkned to him, nor entertained such familiar discourse with him, so hath it also been with many a weake Christian in these times of ours, who might possibly not have falne so dangerously, nor been so led aside from the truth, had not their society been too frequent and familiar, with such persons as these: And here I cannot but blame that disposition I have observed in many that are indeed weake in the faith, and have need to be fed with milke, as nor being able to digest strong meat, and therefore are not to be received to doubtfull disputations, doe yet make themselves judges of the most doubtfull disputations that may be, that are ready to be hearers of, and to enter into disputation with those who are famous for nothing but things vented and maintained by them, that are opposite, and sometimes blasphemous, to the truth of the Gospel, and that out of that false kinde of reasoning I before noted, that being Gods elect, they cannot be seduced, that they must needs be hearers of all persons, how else can all things be tryed by them, and so neglecting that due care of themselves, which as you have heard God calls them unto, as a means for the establishing of them, they are intangled, and before they are aware, caught in the snare that is laid for them, let us here learne of our adversaries, (*fas est & ab hoste doceri*) who to keepe those in their snare, that are taught and perverted by them, kept them from hearing of any that may be able better to informe them whether we pray to God that we be not led into temptation, let us take heed we expose not our selves to the snare of the Devill, and lay our selves open to the greatest temptations that may be. You are spirituall Souldiers, take heed of being too familiar with your enemies, you are safest when you keepe them at a distance, and take heed, that without speciall occasions indeed, you make not treaties with them, lest before you are aware you be insnared by them.

My second direction and exhortation is, that the people of God labour to edifie and build up one another in their most holy faith,

Rom. 14. 1.

which is the Apostle *Jude's* exhortation, as a principall means to keepe us from seduction, *Jude* 20. This should we all endeavour with one another, to watch over one another, and seeke to those things that may conduce to our edification in godlinesse: And that we may so doe,

Let us take heed we forsake not the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is, *Heb* 10 25. that we forsake not the publike assemblies of the people of God, and their society there, nor contemne the publike Ministry and Ordinances of Christs appointment, the means of our edification, this ought we to have speciall respect unto, it being that which is first endeavoured by the adversaries of the truth, to bring into contempt the publike Ordinances, the means of our settling in the truth, and indeed to a separation from them. The Church is compared to an Army, and as in an Army, those are in more danger of being surprized that straggle from it, then those who keepe their places and stations wherein they are set, so is it here. God hath appointed the Ministry of the Word, the continuance of pastors and teachers in his Church, for the edification of the body of Christ, that like children we be tossed to and fro by every winde of Doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftinesse (*νῆπινα*) whereby they lye in wait to deceive, to cheat his people of their faith, *Ephes*. 4. 14. And can it be a wonder to us to see stragling Souldiers surprized, to see men forsaking this means of their settling, to be cheated of this precious jewell by the policie of deceivers: We have of this abundant experience daily, who more unsetled then those who contemne the publike ordinances, and departing from them this day, are the next over-whelmed, and carryed away with the flood of heresies. The pride of many, who in an irregular way, out of a conceit they have of their own gifts, would be teachers themselves, and so despise to be subject to the teaching of others, under whose Ministry, by Gods providence they are placed, and of which they stand in need, is a principall cause of their being given up to so many and so dangerous heresies, which wee may see such daily to fall into: The stone stands fast in the building, and is not easily removed, abiding in the place wherein it was setled, but once falling thence, is easily lost and spurned up and down at the pleasure of every passenger.

Yea,

Yea neglect not occasions and opportunities of private society with one another, be like them in *Malachi* often speaking to one another, *vis unita est fortior*, your adversaries rule is, *divide & vince*, their endeavour is to sow discord and division among the people of God. One Christian ought to strengthen another Christian, as one brother another, and the strong to assist and endeavour the preservation of the weak, all the gifts which God hath given us, are for the edification of one another, and I feare the neglect of frequent, private, Christian society with one another, whereby our gifts might be made use of, and improved in wayes that may tend to the edifying and strengthening of one another, is a reason of the daily falling and departing of many from the truth.

Labour to be well acquainted with the Scriptures, the Word of God: and be sure you hold that principle, that the Scriptures are the Word of God, which some in these times would endeavour to shake you from, this is your sword, suffer not your selves to be disarmed of it, let not any by any means, wring this from you; this is your ballance of the Sanctuary; your spirituall touch-stone; receive no wares, no mettals, but what are first tryed by it, and will hold weight in it: that which is not according to the Law and the testimony, hath no light at all in it, labour to be well acquainted with it, in the true sense there of, whereby you may be able skilfully to use this weapon to your own defence, and offence of your enemies. This direction is given by the Apostle *Jude*, ver. 17. to remember the words spoken before by the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by *Peter* also, 2 *Pet.* 3. 17, 18. to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, whereby wee may bee preserved from being led away by the error of the wicked.

And in this, let your chiefe labour be, to be well acquainted with the profitable things of faith and love, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. leaving vaine questions and unprofitable disputes, to bee well settled in the principles of true Religion, for want whereof many are soone started, yea, and to receive the truth in the love of it, and practice it in sincerity, the Ministry of
faith

faith is to be held in a good conscience, 1 Tim. 3. 9. and to do the
one is the next way to make shipwreck of the other, 1 Tim. 1. 19.
For he that will do his will, doth Christ promise the knowledge of his
Doctrine. John 7. 17. but they who receive the truth in unrighteous-
ness, and receive it not in the love thereof, are in the just judgement
of God given up to the believing of lies, 2 Thes. 2. 11.

Lastly.

Remember what of the Apostle Jude, ver. 20. that with all
the means, we still joyne prayer in the holyspirit, *It is God alone*
who is able to keepe us from falling ver. 24. and he hath promised to
keepe all that are his, *It is he alone that can give wisdom*, whereby
we may be able to understand the deceits of our enemies, to know
the truth of the Word, whereby we may be enabled to contend for
the faith, and stop the mouths of gainsayers. Let us therefore al-
wayes pray to God for our selves, and for one another, as the Apo-
stle Peter teacheth us, 1 Pet. 5. 10. *That the God of all grace,*
who hath called us into his eternall glory by Christ Jesus, after
wee have suffered awhile, *would make us perfect,*
stablish, strengthen, and settle us in the
faith, to him be glory and dominion
for ever and ever,

Amen.

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